

封
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剣舞

ブレイドダンス

12

志瑞祐

Illustration
桜はんぺん

精
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封
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精靈使の剣舞

ブルドダンス
12

志瑞祐

Illustration
桜はんぺん



部屋の奥で響く、衣擦れの音。
そのまま、しばらく待つていると——

「あ、う……

な、なんだ、
これは……

そんな悲鳴が聞こえてきた。

「どうしたんだ?」

「あ……う……そ……の……恥ずかしくて……

「恥ずかしい?」

「……!」

身に着けているのは、装飾用の甲冑なのでは?
と、脳裏に疑問符を浮かべていると——
おずおずといった様子で、部屋の扉が開かれる。

姿を現したエリスの格好に、
カミトは「クリ」と息を呑みこんだ。



Ellis Fahrenhart

エリス・ファーレンガルト

Rinslet Laurenfrost

〔リンスレット・ローレンフロスト〕

「失礼します——あ、力ミト」

「まあ、力ミトさん！」

扉を開けて入ってきたのは、やはりクレアだつた。
リンスレットもいる。

「な、なんだその格好——」

力ミトはまず一人の姿に驚いた。
クレアたちはなぜか、
可憐なメイド服に身を包んでいたのだ。
白と黒のオーソドックスなメイド服。
それぞれ、頭にネコ耳と
キツネ耳のかチューシャを着けている。
……正直、ものすごく可愛い。

Claire Rouge

〔クレア・ルージュ〕

その指をカミトの小指に絡めてきた。

「(一)、(一)うするのよー」

Claire Rouge
クレア・ルージュ

クレアは小指を差し出してくる。

「いい?
明日はあたしと
『精霊大祭』を回るの。
約束よ」

「.....?」

Kazehaya Kamita
カゼハヤ・カミタ

精霊使いの剣舞 12

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Hey Kamito.

If ever a time comes when I am no longer myself, should that happen—

Please kill me.

Also, if possible—

Please forget me.

Prologue

"Ugh..."

Kamito opened his eyes. The first thing to enter his view was a pure white ceiling.

Warm sunlight was streaming into the room through the curtains. The bedsheets were white and newly washed.

Why exactly was he here?

Before that, what on earth...?

(Where is this?)

...His body could not move.

The first possibility entering his mind was that something was restricting his freedom.

But on top of sleepiness, there was nothing resembling shackles. Had he been restrained by magical means, then he should not be able to lift even a finger.

(Am I this weak simply from exhaustion?)

Reaching this tentative conclusion, he surveyed the room to get a grasp on the situation.

First he saw the vase on the bedside shelf. Also, there was a large table in the middle of the room with a wardrobe placed against the wall. Although this furniture was not ornamented with exceptional luxury, it was evident at least that they were high quality and chosen with care.

Also the bed was extremely comfortable, as though his body could sink into it completely.

(...Is this a room used by a noble?)

At least, it did not seem like a commoner's room.

Then if that were the case, why was he placed into a noble's room?

(...Imprisonment? No.)

This room had a window. The door was also made of wood and easy to break.

Unlike that jail-like facility, surrounded by cold rock, this was different.

—At this moment, footsteps were heard outside the room.

The approaching steps showed no intent to conceal them.

...Judging from the situation, it was probably one person. Was it the one who had moved him to this room? Kamito had no idea what the intentions were, but if necessary, he would force the person to speak the truth.

His trained body responded naturally, by picking up something nearby to use as a weapon—The vase on the bedside shelf.

The footsteps stopped. Then came the sound of a key and the door slowly opened.

Kamito inadvertently gasped.

Appearing at the door was a red-haired beauty.

The instant their eyes met, the eyes of ruby suddenly widened greatly.

"...Kami... to...?"

"Huh?"

The water jug in her hand fell to the floor with a loud crash.

But she remained stunned, her body frozen and rooted to the spot.

(...What?)

Holding the vase, Kamito was a little unsure of what to do.

He never expected the one to imprison him to react like this.

Several seconds of silence later, the girl took a deep breath—

"Kamito, you finally woke up."

Without any wariness at all, she rushed straight at Kamito.

(...)

Due to the unexpected action, Kamito's reactions were slowed down.

The girl spread her arms and hugged Kamito on the bed.

Then...

"WAAAAAAAAAAAAAH..."

She suddenly began to cry loudly.

"What are you... doing...?"

Quite confused, Kamito whispered.

(...What the heck is up with this girl?)

Completely bewildered. Didn't this girl imprison him?

On the bed, the girl rubbed her eyes that were slightly swollen from her crying.

"You haven't opened your eyes for the past week. The Academy's healers couldn't cure you. All this time, I was thinking what if you stayed this way, Kamito, never to wake up, what on earth should I do... All this time, I was thinking about this, all this time."

"...A week, Academy?"

Kamito frowned and tilted his head.

"Yes. Everyone, everyone is so worried about you, wahhhhhhhh!"

Burying her face in the sheets, the girl began to cry again.

"Everyone?"

"Do I need to spell it out? Whether Ellis, Rinslet or the perverted princess,

everyone."

"...Hold on. Let me ask a question before anything else."

Kamito interrupted the girl.

"What?"

At a loss, the girl looked up from the sheets.

"—First of all, who are you?"

Instantly, the girl's face froze.



Chapter 1 - Amnesia

Part 1

—The Blade Dance was held in Astral Zero.

Its closing ceremony had already taken place over a week ago.

After a deadly battle where they prevailed against Team Inferno that was led by the Strongest Blade Dancer, Team Scarlet's maidens had achieved a spectacular victory. Completing the parade of triumph at the imperial capital, they then returned to Areishia Spirit Academy.

Despite the sounds of repeated cheering, the girls remained grave in expression.

The world's fate had changed on *that day*.

Ever since the audience with the Elemental Lords at their True Sanctuary...

Kamito had lost consciousness. Even after returning to the human realm, he still did not open his eyes at all.

Then—

Part 2

"—Very likely, it is amnesia caused by mental strain."

At the headmistress' office on the school building's third floor...

Looking at each of the seated girls' faces in turn, Greyworth spoke thus.

"..."

The room fell into absolute silence.

Given that everyone present could not digest the current situation—

"Amnesia.. huh?"

Ellis spoke at this point.

"I am no expert, so I can't be sure."

Greyworth sighed and continued:

"When suffering shock that overloads capacity, the mind will automatically erase memories related to that incident in an attempt to prevent mental trauma—Humans apparently possess this kind of function. In past wars, I have seen many similar cases."

"No way...! Then Kamito—"

Ellis reached forward towards the desk.

Greyworth slowly shook her head.

"If his childhood memories regarding his encounter with the darkness spirit were all erased, then assuredly, the majority of memories related to her were lost—That's essentially the situation."

"..."

The cruel conclusion caused the girls' expressions to turn even more grim.

"Th-Then Kamito..."

Claire spoke in a hoarse voice.

"Then it's equivalent to forgetting all of us completely?"

"...Not just you but the same also goes for the Academy and me."

Greyworth's gray eyes displayed a shred of gloom.

After Kamito regained consciousness, Claire had immediately reported the incident to Greyworth.

Greyworth had met with Kamito and talked for a while to confirm his current condition.

What she discovered was the shocking truth that Kamito had lost his memories for the past few years.

"Most likely, the lad's memories have regressed back to the time when he was still an assassin at the Instructional School. Back to the time when all humanizing emotions were erased, raised as a tool for slaughter—"

Listening to Greyworth, Claire bit her lip hard.

(...So that was Kamito before he met the darkness spirit?)

—Who are you?

Eyes gazing as sharp as knives, rejecting all emotions.

At least, Claire had never seen Kamito with such icy cold eyes before.

While feeling shocked, she also felt a bit of jealousy sprouting in her heart.

(...So Kamito cherishes that darkness spirit to this extent.)

Cherishing her to the point of being unable to accept the truth of Restia's death—

To the point of erasing all memories related to her.

"Then, may I ask—"

"Should we try mentioning the darkness spirit to Kamito again—"

"—Better not."

Greyworth shook her head.

"The lad's amnesia is for protecting his mind after all. If confronted with the unbearable truth again, the lad's psyche could very well collapse completely. In the worst case scenario, he could lose the ability to use spirit seals."

"...You have a point. That possibility is not unlikely."

Fianna nodded and agreed.

She had personally experienced losing the ability to use spirit seals before. A contractor's psychological condition had a massive effect on their relationship with the contracted spirit.

"Th-That does sound plausible..."

Rinslet's shoulders sank.

Greyworth lifted her glasses then looked at the girls' faces again.

"Very regrettably, I am not in a position to be privy to what actually happened in the True Sanctuary of the Elemental Lords. But let me ask this, is the lad's amnesia related to the loss of that darkness spirit?"

"...Yes."

Claire nodded.

What happened in the True Sanctuary of the Elemental Lords was absolutely forbidden from being disclosed to others.

This was not only because of the oath imposed on Blade Dance winners but also their promise with Water Elemental Lord, Iseria Seaward.

While in audience with the Elemental Lords to pray to them, *something* happened.

This resulted in Kamito losing the darkness spirit.

Apart from that, Greyworth did not know anything about it. The only ones who knew what happened there on that day were the members of Team Scarlet.

—The plan to release the Elemental Lords who were driven mad by the corruption of the Otherworldly Darkness.

Having obtained the assistance of Iseria Seaward, the Water Elemental Lord's avatar that was sealed at the Abandoned City, they almost succeeded in their plan.

However, the instant just before Kamito was about to release the Fire Elemental Lord, the Demon King's power had gone out of control. Overcome with pain and suffering, Kamito was engulfed by the Otherworldly Darkness

gushing out from the throne.

Everyone despaired. No one had the heart to imagine what would happen when body of flesh came into contact with the otherworldly darkness that caused even the Elemental Lords to go mad because they could not endure.

But in the next instant, an incredible phenomenon took place right before their eyes.

The Otherworldly Darkness, which should have devoured Kamito completely, suddenly vanished.

Next, as the darkness was swept away, Claire and the girls witnessed an unbelievable sight.

Held in Kamito's hand, the Demon Slayer's blade—

Stabbed right through Restia's chest.

The meaning of her action was completely unclear.

But Claire could understand why she did it.

Darkness spirit Restia—

(...intends to save Kamito.)

As the scene from that day replayed in her mind, Claire murmured in her heart.

Pierced in the heart, Restia soon disappeared.

At the same time, the Otherworldly Darkness gushing from the elemental lords' throne also ceased activity.

...After that, Claire could not remember clearly. Everyone felt as though they were plunged in a dream.

Fenrir picked up the dazed Kamito and retreated from the spot while Claire and the girls fled the True Sanctuary as fast as they could as well. The Endless Corridor's door could be heard shutting behind them. As soon as they

came to their senses—

They were back to the Divine Ritual Institute's shrine where the five Queens were waiting.

Back then, Kamito was unconscious, still holding Est in sword form.

Then the Demon Slayer also—

"...Excuse me, Headmistress, how is Est?"

Suddenly recalling, Claire asked.

"According to the reconnaissance team's report, there are no obvious changes. Currently still in deep slumber, most likely."

"I see..."

They had originally hoped that something might change once Kamito recovered consciousness.

Indeed. Having destroyed the darkness spirit, the Demon Slayer likewise departed from Kamito's hand.

The moment Kamito's body returned to the Divine Ritual Institute's shrine, the Demon Slayer disappeared.

—That said, Est did not vanish completely from the world.

The spirit seal was still present on Kamito's right hand and her location was also found out.

In the instant the Demon Slayer vanished...

Within the Spirit Forest in the Academy's territory, a phenomenon involving a massive release of divine power was observed.

This was the underground temple where Est was sealed in the past.

It was reportedly an old military installation that was currently sealed.

The Academy had assembled a reconnaissance team to analyze the divine

power's type and discovered that it came from a powerful sword spirit possessing the steel attribute.

Why had Est teleported to that kind of place—The reason was not yet known. However, this was probably related to the fact that Est had been sealed in that temple in the past.

(...The headmistress seems to have some idea.)

The underground facility was originally a military secret and not disclosed to ordinary students. In actual fact, Claire previously did not know about its existence in the Academy's territory.

In any case, the underground facility could not be searched without the nation's authorization.

One would need to wait several days at least before an official search could start.

"Oh well, let's just observe quietly for now. The imperial capital will send experts shortly. Before that, don't make a fuss and refrain from provocation."

"...Experts?"

"Yes. The Empire's number one spirit doctor, no doubt about it. If it's her, she might be able to find a solution."

Saying that, Greyworth turned her gaze towards Ellis.

"Ellis, increase the number of knights on surveillance to four."

"Four knights?"

Ellis asked in response.

"Uh, I do not think it is necessary to keep him under such strict surveillance. Kamito is not a dangerous character."

"Oh really?"

Hearing her reply, Greyworth smiled in amusement.

Claire was shocked. This was also her first time to see Ellis raising objections to the headmistress.

"It's like you're a completely different person. Two months earlier, who was the one who opposed vehemently on grounds of a male elementalist being extremely dangerous—"

"U-Umm..."

Ellis's face gradually turned bright red.

"I can understand how you feel, but it is decided already. Very likely, the lad's mental state has regressed back to his days as an assassin at the Instructional School. Regrettably, it would be best if you don't treat him as the Kamito you know so well."

"No way..."

At this moment, the bell rang to signal the beginning of afternoon classes.

"—This conversation is hereby concluded. Return to your duties as students."

In a commanding tone of voice, Greyworth dismissed Claire and the girls.

Part 3

The office door opened and Claire's group exited the room.

"So, see you later."

"Yeah."

Parting ways with Ellis who had Sylphid Knights duties and Fianna who had to head off to a supplementary lesson for a cooking practical, Claire and Rinslet walked in the opposite direction.

As Raven Class's most problematic duo, they also had top grades and were already taking upper division courses back when they were in the lower division.

This was also one reason why they were feared and ostracized by the upper

division students.

"...He finally regained consciousness, but never did I expect him to lose his memory."

Walking in the corridor, Rinslet sighed.

"This cannot be helped. Better than his mind breaking."

Darkness spirit Restia—The contracted spirit of Strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell three years ago.

She was the girl who had conferred human emotions upon Kamito whose heart had been denied by the Instructional School.

Whether coming to the Academy or participating in the Blade Dance again, Kamito had done everything in order to find her, the one whom he lost three years ago.

However, having finally found her, she was destroyed before Kamito's eyes.

—Rather, Kamito had killed her by his own hand.

"If the spirit seal remained, at least there'd be a glimmer of hope."

"Yeah..."

Last time when Est disappeared, the spirit seal branded upon Kamito's right hand did not vanish.

Hence, Kamito was not devoured by despair and was able to pull himself together.

But Restia's seal had vanished completely.

"She saved Kamito. And definitely, that includes the world—"

Murmuring, Claire turned her gaze towards the blue sky outside the window.

It was still unknown whether Kamito had successfully released the Fire Elemental Lord or not.

But according to Iseria Seaward who had remained behind in Astral Zero to monitor the Elemental Lords, their madness had currently subsided somewhat. This was similar to three years ago when the Strongest Blade Dancer had released the Water Elemental Lord.

"After that, we still haven't received any communications from Iseria-sama, right?"

"No, and there's no way to summon her from this side."

Rinslet's gaze fell upon the spirit seal *branded upon her left hand* while she spoke.

The seal of the ice rose—This was the gift that Iseria had bestowed directly upon Rinslet.

Although different from spirit seals that served as the proof of spirit contracts, through this seal, Rinslet was able to hear Iseria's voice from Astral Zero.

That said, her only message was the one time when they moved the unconscious Kamito back to the human realm. The Elemental Lords' current condition was quite worrying.

—The liberation plan was just an emergency measure after all.

Even if the plan succeeded, the Otherworldly Darkness was still eating away at the elemental lords.

Henceforth, which direction shall the world take—

This burden was too heavy for mere students.

"...Uh, your sister needs to recover soon."

"Yes. Once Iseria-sama recovers her powers completely, it should be an easy task..."

The Laurenfrost family's second daughter, Judia, had angered the insane

Water Elemental Lord and was imprisoned in eternal, cursed ice.

Rinslet had entered the Blade Dance in order to save her, but ultimately, she did not get a chance to voice that wish in the True Sanctuary.

Judia Laurenfrost was still currently imprisoned in the cursed ice.

(Nee-sama is still missing as before...)

Sighing lightly, Claire turned her gaze back to the ground.

In the spring at the courtyard, girls from the lower division were setting up a shrine for making offerings to spirits. In the surroundings, there were even people frolicking in swimsuits or playing musical instruments, etc. The mood seemed quite harmonious and joyful.

"...Good grief. Look how peaceful this place is."

"Yeah."

The Academy was busy preparing for the Great Festival of the Spirits to be held two days later.

The Bountiful Harvest Supplication Festival, Water Spirit Festival and other seasonal celebrations were common in Areishia Spirit Academy, but the Great Festival of the Spirits was probably still the largest in scale.

Lasting for two days, this school festival's purpose was to express gratitude to the spirits. It was a grand event that attracted visitors from all over the Ordesia Empire and even foreign tourists. This was one of the rare opportunities for the Academy's sheltered young ladies to have contact with the external world.

Furthermore, since the Academy also produced the Blade Dance's champion team this year, the festival was expected to get even more crowded than in previous years.

Having brought the Elemental Lords' blessings and protection to the Empire, Team Scarlet naturally had to attend the second day's ceremony as the

festival's main attraction.

"Naturally, Kamito-san must attend, right?"

"...Yeah. After all, Kamito is the main star who defeated that Strongest Blade Dancer to obtain victory. The crowd won't accept it if he doesn't even show up."

Only a small number of people including Freya the homeroom teacher were privy to the fact that Kamito had been unconscious for the past week. Ordinary students were told that he was recuperating due to injuries from the blade dance against the Strongest Blade Dancer.

Thanks to that, the headquarters of the Sylphid Knights, of which Kamito was a member, received a huge number of bouquets, letters and handmade confectionery from girls worrying about Kamito.

"...Say, that guy seems to have risen in popularity ever since returning to the Academy."

"Y-Yes, that's true indeed..."

Cough cough, Rinslet coughed.

Indeed. Although many girls feared Kamito back when he first enrolled as a male elementalist, after witnessing his active performance in the Blade Dance, increasing numbers of girls were secretly becoming his fans.

Naturally, this was nothing surprising for Claire who knew Kamito's true identity. After all, Kamito had enamored all the young maidens across the entire continent three years ago as the Strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell.

(It's true that when engaged in a blade dance, Kamito is very, very cool...)

Claire pouted, sulking a little.

...Somehow, she felt displeased. There was an indescribable feeling.

She still had not settled her feelings regarding Kamito's true identity.

Ren Ashbell was the one whom Claire idolized. It felt completely unreal to suddenly say that her true identity was Kamito.

(...Sigh. It seems all I can do is think about Kamito's matters.)

Her cheeks involuntarily went hot. Claire shook her head as though trying to cover it up.

At a fork in the corridor, Rinslet stopped walking.

Although both girls were taking upper division courses, they pursued different specialties and therefore had separate classrooms. Rinslet's class was high level ritual performance while Claire's was introduction to summoning spells.

"Then see you shortly after. I will make some nutritious soup for Kamito-san and visit him."

"Yeah, I should also make something that's easy to digest."

"...Uh Claire, charcoal is not easy to digest, you know?"

"S-Stop looking down on me! I-I can do it when I put my mind to it!"

Chapter 2 - Escape

Part 1

While Claire and Rinslet were walking in the corridor...

(...It's about time.)

Under the covers in bed, Kamito summoned his consciousness.

Rather than waking up naturally, he had applied self-suggestion beforehand to wake up on purpose—This was a special skill taught by the Instructional School.

(My stamina seems to have recovered to some extent.)

Maintaining his posture lying in bed, Kamito confirmed his body's condition.

The woman had not questioned him for long, probably in consideration of his exhausted stamina. Once she found out he had woken up already, surely she was going to resume the questioning.

(...But the situation seems even trickier than imagined.)

Through that woman's questioning, Kamito was able to understand the current situation to some extent.

Areishia Spirit Academy—This was the organization where the Empire trained elite elementalists. From the way it looked, he was being imprisoned here and suffering from severe memory loss as well.

Indeed, he had forgotten everything about why he was here.

(Infiltrating this facility on a mission and fighting elementalists, then losing my memory due to physical trauma to the brain or mental manipulation—Probably something like that.)

Calmly reaching a conclusion, his thinking proceeded to the next step.

In order to prevent the organization's existence from being exposed, the

Instructional School's assassins were ordered to commit suicide as soon as possible if they became captives.

The organization's orders were absolute. Well-trained assassins did not cling needlessly to life.

Even without tools, there were many methods to commit suicide. Even without deadly poison buried in a tooth, it was possible to end one's life in short time.

(But—)

After all, suicide was only limited to situations when one was rendered a captive.

Currently, Kamito's state was—

(...It's hard to call myself a captive.)

Whether by physical or magical means, he was not restrained in any way. As frail as his body's condition may be, it posed no particular hindrance for an Instructional School's assassin.

(If they intended to render me helpless, they should at least apply a sealed barrier.)

Was the renowned lair of the Empire's elite elementalists nothing more than a mere educational institution?

(There are two guards outside—)

Lying in bed, Kamito counted the presences outside the door.

They were presumably able to use elemental waffen and experienced to a certain degree. In his current state of depleted stamina, without a weapon, fighting elementalists head on would be undoubtedly suicidal.

Then how about passing through here—Kamito lifted his upper torso and looked towards the window. Gathered below were a great number of

uniformed girls, apparently making preparations for some kind of festival.

(...Oh well, at least it's better than jumping there.)

Kamito swiftly got up and quietly left the bed.

At this moment, he suddenly lost balance and almost fell over. Possibly due to his memory loss, perhaps he needed some time to refamiliarize himself with his senses.

(Somehow, this body feels a bit strange.)

He soon noticed the sense of dissonance but decided to put it aside for now.

Kamito drew in a quick breath then:

"—Release."

He muttered quietly.

Instantly, his entire body's senses became sharp and his mind became focused.

This was a skill to remove mental shackles through powerful self-suggestion, thereby allowing him to temporarily surpass the body's limits. Entering this state, an assassin would stop feeling fatigue and also become numb to pain to a certain extent.

Surpassing limits meant releasing the body's original safety mechanisms in the first place. A strong backlash would inevitably follow.

In this manner, without hiding his presence at all, Kamito walked to the door.

The two girls outside began to get nervous. He could sense them readying themselves.

"...The two of you over there, I'd like to ask you something."

Kamito deliberately used a barely audible voice to speak.

Hence, the two guards' presences moved close to the door.

"Say. I'd like to hear a bit about my situation."

"E-Ellis-sama has orders not to speak with you!"

"P-Please return to bed without a fuss."

Inexplicably, the replying voices sounded slightly timid.

"Oh no... I talked to the king of lust, what should I do..."

"D-Don't worry. A short exchange of words won't deprive you of your purity."

"A short... What if we talk too much?"

"I-In that case, I'm not too sure..."

Whispers came from outside the door.

As to what the content meant, although Kamito could not comprehend—

"—I see, I get it."

Hearing Kamito's reply, the two's presence relaxed somewhat.

Instantly, Kamito aimed a palm strike at the door.

"...Ooph...!"

A brief moan was heard, quickly followed by the sound of the girls collapsing to the ground.

Destructive Impact—An assassination technique performed by wrapping a fist in divine power and releasing a shockwave to pass through objects.

Next he broke the locked door and pushed it open.

The girls by the door had fainted, having suffered concussions.

Part 2

"Th-This is not stealing a march... A-Absolutely not stealing a march..."

Ellis murmured to herself while walking along the Academy's long hallways.

Carried in her hand was a small pot. After parting ways with Claire and the others, Ellis had returned to her room, warmed up the porridge she had made in the morning and taken it out.

Made with quite a few medicinal plants, this special seven-herb porridge was not only easy to digest but also very nutritious.

As food, it was quite appropriate for Kamito who had just woken up.

"Th-This comes purely out of my responsibilities as captain of the Sylphid Knights, I am just visiting a fellow member of the Knights. Simorgh, you agree, right?"

Hearing its master's question, the demon bird standing on Ellis's shoulder cooed.

Ellis nodded with satisfaction and gave a piece of dried meat to her contracted spirit with the horrifying appearance.

"Yes, indeed indeed. When initially recovering from illness, eating easily digested porridge is the best. However, I accidentally warmed it up too much, s-so it is now necessary for me to blow on it to cool it. Th-Then, umm, a-ah..."

Looking up, Ellis entered a delusion.

'Kamito, h-how is my porridge?'

After blowing on it, Ellis sent the spoon into Kamito's mouth.

But after swallowing the porridge, Kamito went:

'—So-so. Not salty enough.'

That was his criticism.

'...~I-I see. My apologies. I will pay more attention next time...'

'No, this is fine.'

Kamito lightly placed his hand on the disheartened Ellis's shoulder.

'...Ah, w-what are you doing, Kamito... Kyah~♪'

Lick. Suddenly, she felt her neck being licked gently.

'Now, this saltiness is just right.'

Lick. Lick lick. Lick.

'Hyah... Oh no, Kamito... I-If you like that spot...'

'Where has all your strength gone now, straitlaced captain?'

Lick. Lick lick lick.

'...N-No... Mmm... This intensity, no good, a-ahhhh!'

...His personality vastly modified, Kamito violently pushed her down.

Then, then, then—

...Peck. Peck peck.

Suddenly, she felt her neck being pecked by a sharp beak.

Walking while plunging into a delusion, Ellis suddenly regained her senses.

(...W-What am I thinking about!?)

Cough cough, Ellis coughed and straightened her posture.

(Clearly Kamito lost his memory due to encountering a painful experience—)

Shaking her head repeatedly, she soon recovered a stern and dignified face as befitted the captain of the knights.

Taking a turn in the corridor—

"...Wha!?"

Ellis could not help but find herself speechless.

In front of Kamito's room, two girls lay collapsed on the floor.

They were the members of the Sylphid Knights in charge of monitoring him.

"A-Are you okay!?"

Ellis placed her pot on the floor then frantically ran over to the two girls' side.

...They were still breathing. No external injuries visible, they probably only lost consciousness.

"...Attacked by a mass of divine energy at close range huh."

Upon hearing these whispers, one of the girls woke up.

"...Ugh... Captain..."

"...Ruska**, what happened?"

"The king of lust... escaped..."

Ellis's face went livid.

It turned out she should have followed Greyworth's directions and quickly increased the number of knights on surveillance duty.

Kamito was not a man who would harm girls. Ellis knew this fact very well.

However, the amnesiac Kamito currently was a wild beast let loose among crowds of girls. The Demon King of the Night's basic instincts were thoroughly exposed, doing this to innocent young maidens—

"...Th-That type of thing is forbidden—Forbidden!"

Ellis stood up and yelled.

"I-In any case, Kamito must be captured as soon as possible—"

He must be captured before anything happened.

Apart from protecting the chastity of the Academy's girls, more importantly, it was for the sake of Kamito's reputation.

Ellis gathered wind spirits from the surroundings and issued orders to her companions in the Knights.

Part 3

(...This is almost like the Instructional School's Cave Castle)

At this moment, having escaped his room, Kamito was roaming the buildings in his pajamas.

Perhaps due to having slept for a long period of time, he was still feeling a sense of dissonance about his body.

Since lessons were currently taking place throughout the entire school building, he did not encounter any students. The spirits he ran into along the hallways did not particularly pay any attention to him.

Prioritizing the comfort of spirits over humans, the Academy's architecture included crisscrossing staircases and hallways with many turns and forks.

Along the path ahead, there were spirits hovering lightly like spheres of light. One could easily mistake themselves as being lost in a fairy tale world.

The Instructional School, where Kamito was raised, also had a similar labyrinthine layout, but to his knowledge, its purpose was only for defense against external enemies.

(So I still remember inane stuff of that sort...)

Why was he here—He still could not recall this most important point.

(What clues are there—?)

Suddenly, a certain girl's face surfaced in Kamito's mind.

The girl who had hugged him while crying when Kamito woke up.

(...That girl seems to know me.)

What sort of deep relation did she share with Kamito before he lost his memory—

Kamito suppressed his presence at this moment and walked over to the window.

A large number of princess maidens had gathered at the front gates, preparing for a large-scale ritual.

Indeed, some grand festival was apparently being held in a few days.

(...Looks like I won't be able to escape through the front gates.)

Although the opponents were students lacking in combat experience, fighting this many elementalists with his bare hands would be far too rash. If the militarized spirit user, Muir Alenstarl, were here instead, perhaps breaking through by force would be possible—

Just as Kamito was thinking...

His stomach's rumblings echoed loudly in the corridor.

(...Crap...)

The Instructional School's assassins were trained such that it was possible for them to fight and undertake operations for multiple days even without food. Nevertheless, it was merely a possibility.

Furthermore, Kamito had been confined to bed for the past while and his body was probably sustained by nothing more than revitalizing magic from healers.

Currently relying on powerful self-suggestion, he was still able to move, but at this rate, he was going to collapse from hunger sooner or later.

(Why did I fail to notice something so elementary?)

This was the type of mistake he absolutely would not make normally.

Kamito could not deny that his amnesiac state was making him anxious.

(...Is there.. anything here?)

Thinking wishfully, he checked his pajamas pocket.

Of course, there was no food placed there so conveniently...

"...Kamito-kun?"

At this moment, a girl's voice was heard behind him.

"...!?"

Kamito looked back to see that several students had appeared from a door in the corridor.

Most striking of them was an especially beautiful maiden with gorgeous black hair and dusk-colored eyes. For some reason, the design of her uniform differed from the other girls.

"Kamito-kun, why are you here—"

In the middle of speaking, she suddenly covered her mouth.

"Umm... Could it be that you escaped?"

Instantly, Kamito suddenly kicked the ground and closed in on the girl.

Using the momentum, he covered her mouth and pushed her to the floor.

"Wait—Kamito-kun... Mmmmmmmph~!"

"—Quiet. Make a further sound and I'll kill you."

Kamito pinned the girl down and declared coldly.

"You too—"

Keeping that posture, Kamito glared at the girls who were peeking from the doorway. However—

"Kya, kyaaaaaaah!"

"The king of lust shows his true nature!"

"H-Help, anyone!"

The girls screamed while scattering in all directions to flee.

"Wha—"

Kamito was speechless.

It looked like pushing the black-haired girl down not only failed to serve as a threat but also backfired with the opposite effect.

(...It'd be a problem if they called in more comrades.)

In that case, he had to leave the scene as quickly as possible.

Kamito took his hand away from the lips of the pinned-down girl. At this moment—

"...~Good grief, as great as it is for you to take the initiative, but all things considered, doing this out in the open under public scrutiny, Kamito-kun, you're such a pervert..."

The girl complained, blushing to her ears.

"P-Pervert? ...W-What are you talking about?"

Faced with the unexpected accusation, Kamito felt quite awkward.

Kamito gazed at the girl's face again.

Gorgeous black hair. Eyes the color of dusk, seeming as though they would meld into the night.

An extremely beautiful girl who would leave a deep and lasting impression with but a single glance...

...Growl.

Suddenly, a noise broke any tension that could exist in the corridor.

...Still pinning the girl down, Kamito was taken aback.

"Uh... Kamito-kun, are you hungry?"

"None of your business."

Trying as hard as he could to conceal his wavering, Kamito replied calmly.

Hence, she smiled and reached towards her cleavage.

"...I made some snacks during the cooking practical, would you like some?"

She took out a small bag.

Kamito swallowed his saliva.

(A trap—I have to consider that possibility...)

Encountering this girl here was by chance.

There was no reason for a student at this prestigious academy to be carrying poisoned snacks.

It was probably a snack intended to be offered to spirits.

"Why?"

"Huh?"

"I'm a dangerous, escaped prisoner, right?"

"I can't leave you to suffer if you're hungry, Kamito-kun."

The girl gazed at Kamito with sincere eyes.

After a moment's hesitation—

"Found him, over there!"

"Carefully circle around to his back! You'll be taken captive as soon as you make eye contact!"

"We must rescue Fianna-sama!"

Armored knights were climbing up the stairs.

"...Sorry, I'll be taking this."

Kamito took the bag of snacks and ran down the corridor.

Part 4

...Several minutes later.

"Gu... ah..."

Hiding in an empty classroom, Kamito collapsed in suffering alone.

After eating the cookie, a searing sensation of pain instantly rushed through his throat, paralyzing his entire body.

Clutching his belly, Kamito rolled on the floor, feeling like he was about to break out with fever.

(...Guh... It was poisoned after all?)

No wait, as an Instructional School's assassin, his body was already accustomed to poison. Ordinary poison should not have an effect. This was simply—

(...Unimaginably horrible in flavor!)

Trembling, Kamito came to this conclusion.

(...Offering this to spirits? Or perhaps, this is what spirits prefer?)

Kamito pondered over and over again. However, now was not the time to be thinking about such matters.

"Capture the beast of lust!" "Underwear! Use underwear to lure him out!"

A patter of footsteps arrived at the corridor in front of the empty classroom.

Things would be over if they found him.

Kamito was unable to fight in his current state.

(...Speaking of which, why are they calling me a beast of lust?)

Before losing his memory, what had he done in this Academy—?

"He should be nearby!" "Search the empty classroom!"

Intense footsteps were approaching.

(...No other choice.)

Looking outside, there seemed to be no one in the yard behind the school building.

Kamito took off his pajama top, tore it up, tied knots and made an impromptu rope.

Although baring his upper torso made him look even more suspicious, he decided to ignore that for now.

Tying one end of the fabric to a large table, he escaped outside through a window.

Using the knotted cloth, Kamito swiftly slid down the school building's outer wall. Although the fabric was not long enough to reach the bottom, jumping from that height should not result in a twisted ankle given his body's abilities.

Just as he successfully descended one floor—

Woof, woof!

Barking was heard from somewhere.

(...A dog?)

Turning to look in the direction of the barks—

Kamito found a large white dog amidst the bushes opposite the school building.

(...No, that's not right, it's not a dog!)

A direwolf—a high-level spirit in beast form.

The wolf with white fur suddenly pounced as soon as it caught sight of Kamito.

"Woah!"

Kamito almost lost grip of the cloth.

The wolf's sharp claws missed him by a mere inch.

Woof woof!

The direwolf spirit did not look hostile, but was simply acting playful with

Kamito.

(Do spirits show intimacy with anyone apart from their contractor?)

...Impossible. At least, Kamito had never heard of any similar cases—

"...Fenrir, what's the matter?"

At this moment, a window of a classroom below opened and a girl looked out.

A young lady with dazzling platinum-blonde hair and beautiful eyes of emerald.

Her eyebrows lifted with surprise as she looked up. Then—

"Kyaaaaaaaaah!"

She screamed shrilly.

This was hardly surprising. After all, a half-naked man was currently scaling down the wall.

"Rinslet-san, what's the matter?"

"As the daughter of the prestigious Laurenfrost family, screaming like that is truly... Kyah!"

Girls' faces popped out of the classroom's windows one after another.

Furthermore, apparently in the process of changing for a purification ritual, they were all in their underwear.

"D-Don't look!"

"It's a misunder—"

Kamito frantically tried to deny.

"Shut up, this pervert!"

But before he could do so, the light from a girl's spirit magic burned through the cloth Kamito was holding onto.

"...!"

Falling on the ground, Kamito's whole body still suffered the painful impact despite performing a break-fall.

"...Ahhh, K-Kamito-san!?"

The platinum blonde hurried over in worry.

The girls in the classroom also climbed out the window one after another.

A number of them were wielding elemental waffen.

"Guh..."

...He had to escape. He could not allow himself to be caught here.

"A-Are you okay?"

The beauty in her underwear was examining Kamito's eyes.

Kamito grabbed her arms and swiftly twisted, pinning them behind her back.

"...Yahhh... W-What are you doing!?"

"Be quiet, girl."

"...Hyau... Kamito-san, whispering like this, ahuu..."

After he whispered by her ear, the girl gradually lost strength.

As expected, the students of the Academy had no endurance against males.

"Damn you, cowardly villain!" "You dare to take a hostage! You're the worst!" "T-To think I was starting to revise my impression of you!"

Dressed in their underwear, the girls stopped running and surrounded Kamito.

The direwolf spirit was also circling in the surroundings, looking troubled.

(...Okay, what should I do?)

He was going to use this girl as a hostage to make his escape—

Suddenly, a violent gale blew overhead.

"...!?"

Kamito looked up—

"K-Kamito... W-What on earth are you doing!?"

Wielding a spear of gales, a girl jumped down from a second floor window.

The young female knight landed lightly, her ponytail swaying.

"Captain..."

The blonde lady with her arms pinned behind her back spoke quietly.

...This ponytailed girl was apparently the leader of the knights.

Her dark-brown eyes glared at Kamito.

"...Hmph, seriously, even with amnesia, y-you are still behaving as the Demon King of the Night!"

"...Demon King of the Night?"

The unfamiliar term made Kamito repeat it as a question. The old people of the Instructional School did indeed call Kamito the Demon King's successor

(Are the two titles connected somehow?)

The young female knight readied her spear, enveloped in gales.

"Kamito, I have no intention of harming you. Although I understand that you feel ill at ease due to your amnesia, I still hope you could release Rinslet and return to your room obediently."

"That's not gonna fly."

Kamito gripped harder on the hostage's arms.

"...Ah, K-Kamito-san, so perverted...!"

"If you want to catch me, try me, okay?"

Kamito tried to taunt his opponent and make her falter—

"...Then it cannot be helped!"

The captain swung her spear horizontally.

A roaring airmass shot out from the spear's tip.

"...!?"

Kamito pushed Rinslet aside and jumped sideways.

The raging wind dug up a large hole where the two were originally standing.

(...She intended to get the hostage caught up as collateral damage!?)

This attack exceeded Kamito's expectations.

"How displeasing, Captain, you are being too reckless!"

"My apologies. But even if it really struck you, there is still Fenrir's protection."

"Th-That's true but still..."

Unconcerned with the complaining girl, the captain shot out a raging gust of wind.

A directional blast of wind pressure. Being struck would not be fatal, but in his current state, Kamito would definitely lose the ability to fight after getting hit by this attack.

At the same time, she charged.

The spear tip, enveloped in gales, brushed past Kamito's body.

(...So strong. She's far above the other students.)

While rolling on the ground, Kamito calmly analyzed. Her spear technique and speed were quite excellent. Probably a wind elementalist, she was skilled in combining wind magic with her own martial arts.

—On the other hand, Kamito's body was far from peak condition. Taken together with the damage from the cookie he ate and the sense of dissonance he could not dispel, his movements were quite sluggish.

"Kamito, give yourself up!"

Kamito barely managed to dodge the spear's downward swing.

"Good skills. Female knight, your name?"

"...!"

In that instant, her stern and dignified eyes filled up with great teardrops.

(...Huh?)

"You really forgot—"

The girl made a lonely expression and bit her lip tightly.

"I am the Fahrengart family's second daughter—Ellis Fahrengart."

"...Fahrengart family?"

Kamito had heard the name before.

He remembered it was the name of renowned military family that was in charge of the Ordesia Empire's military affairs.

Ellis raised her spear high—

"I am your fiancée!"

"—Huh?"

The shocking words caused Kamito's movements to stop for an instant.

Wrapped in fierce winds, the spear swung down overhead mercilessly.

(Crap...!)

Evasion was too late. Kamito hastily crossed his arms and entered a defensive pose.

Although he knew deep down that this level of defense was pointless in the face of elemental waffen—

Clang—!

Just as his arms crossed, he felt a sharp pain on the back of his right hand.
(...Whaaaaat...!?)

Ellis's dark-brown eyes widened greatly.

The instant the elemental waffe's blade was blocked...

Bright light erupted and swept away everything in the surroundings.

Part 5

"...Ugh...!"

Feeling intense pain all over, Kamito could not help but groan painfully. He lay collapsed in the bushes some distance away from the back of the school building.

(What the heck happened...)

Scolding his hazy consciousness, he was just about to stand up when—
Something grabbed the back of his collar.

"...Uwah!?"

In that manner, he was forcibly dragged into the bushes.

In the bushes was the red-haired beauty from before.

"Y-You..."

"Quiet. Or you want to be discovered?"

The girl stopped him by pressing a finger against his lips.

The soft sensation of her finger caused Kamito's heart rate to speed up.

"The pervert has escaped!" "He must be captured at all costs!" "Find him,

find him!"

A crowd of armed girls passed by the bushes.

"...Sheesh. When I caught sight of you in the classroom, I was thinking something happened—"

The girl sighed and glared at Kamito.

"If you get found now, you'll be drawn and quartered by the girls."

"...I can see that."

Cold sweat flowed down Kamito's forehead.

Many spirits flew back and forth in the surroundings in search of Kamito.

Escaping from the Academy peacefully was virtually impossible now.

"What happened? It seemed like there was a sudden explosion."

"Who knows—"

Kamito looked at his right hand.

Suddenly, a complicated design appeared on the back of his hand.

"...W-What is this!?"

"That's a spirit seal. Proof of the bond between you and your contracted spirit."

The girl told Kamito with a serious expression.

"Spirit seal? How did I enter into a spirit contract—"

Throb—!

A sudden pang of intense pain was instantly produced in his brain.

"...Tsk... Ooh... Guh...!"

Kamito could not help but clutch his head and groan.

"...You were probably about to summon Est unconsciously."

"Es...t...?"

Throb, throb, throb—

"...You know something about this seal?"

"Yes."

The girl nodded.

"Anyway, come to my room. I'll tell you as much as possible about your memories. After all, it's best if you hid for a while until the commotion subsides."

"Guh..."

Recalling the group of armed girls, Kamito covered his mouth.

(Clues about my lost memories huh...)

At least, this girl did not seem like she intended to hand him over to the knights—

Kamito hesitated for a moment, then...

...Growl.

His stomach rumbled loudly.

...Speaking of which, ever since waking up, I haven't eaten anything except for that deadly cookie.

"...Umm, I'll prepare snacks as well."

Hearing her suggestion—

Kamito was completely swayed this time.

Chapter 3 - Upheaval in the Theocracy

Part 1

—The scene enacted there was hell on earth.

"Please stop, royal sister! You must not advance any further!"

Scorpia—According to legends, the demon scorpion palace used to be Demon King Solomon's residence. It was now being assaulted by hundreds and thousands of demon spirits.

Fighting alone inside a bloodstained hall was the Alphas Theocracy's second princess and general of the hierarch's royal guard, Saladia Kahn.

Waist-length blue hair. Amber eyes infused with intense light.

However, heavy despair filled the face of this young girl who had only reached sixteen this year.

She was holding in her hand a grimoire.

Alf Laylah Wa-Laylah—the elemental waffe for summoning countless spirits.

"Oh my, you're looking energetic, my dear Saladia—"

The witch's lips were distorted in a grin of mockery.

She knew that her twin younger sister was bluffing.

—Several hours earlier, the eldest princess, Sjora Kahn, had suddenly led two hundred cult troops and taken over Scorpia. The soldiers guarding the royal palace were crushed helplessly by the onslaught of the demon spirits. The militarized spirits controlled by elementalists were devoured completely before they could bring out any of their true worth.

The Theocracy's royal guard were no pushovers. Led by Saladia Kahn, these elementalists guarding the palace were all experts who could each take on a thousand.

However, they were all defeated in quick succession before they could even release their elemental waffen.

The summoned contracted spirits were all in disarray, baring their fangs at their own contractors.

Similarly, the countless spirits summoned by Saladia Kahn started slaughtering one another.

While this hellish scene repeated nonstop in the center of the great hall, the witch walked leisurely.

"Fu, fufu, fu..."

"...Tsk... Oooh, ooh..."

Further ahead from the hall was the throne. Naturally, Saladia could not allow the witch to advance any further—

But with knees trembling, she was rooted to the spot. The witch's serpentine eyes pinned her down.

(...That's not my elder sister Sjora. It's a monster that will devour the nation!)

With a trembling hand, Saladia drew the scimitar from her waist.

"Ah... O-Ooh... Ahhhhhhhhhh!"

With a mighty yell, she charged at the witch.

"Oh dear, you really seek death that much?"

The witch jeered.

She dodged the blade lightly and punched Saladia in the gut.

"Kahah—"

"Ahh... Guh... Ooh...!"

The Theocracy's princess general moaned and spat out blood.

At the same time, Sjora picked up the scimitar—

"Foolish sister. Despite the fact that you have never wielded a sword before."

"...Guh... Go ahead, kill me—"

The amber eyes were filled with hatred as the girl glared at her elder sister.

"Fufu, of course I won't kill you so easily. Because you are still useful."

The witch stepped over Saladia, collapsed in a pool of blood, and continued towards the throne.

Then—

"—I have returned. Hierarch."

She pointed the scimitar at the old man on the royal throne.

"...Have you gone mad? Cursed woman."

Next, a hoarse voice echoed in the great hall.

"A snake's child is ultimately a snake. Letting you live was evidently my greatest blunder."

Dressed in a crimson robe, the old man spoke with bitterness in his voice.

The Alphas Theocracy's current hierarch—Rajihal Kahn.

Despite having passed the age of eighty, the old king's gaze still had not lost its sharpness.

He was the tough warrior who survived the two Ranbal Wars despite the Theocracy's location, surrounded by the Ordesia Empire, Dracunia and other powerful countries.

Bloody conflicts between clan members were nothing rare. Nevertheless, he had crushed countless enemies along his path, stepping over numerous corpses, remaining in power to rule this Theocracy in spite of its political instability.

But right now, the witch was pointing a murderous blade at his throat.

"—You have no right to sit on that throne."

"And you do? Cursed snake woman—"

"Fufu—"

Sjora laughed in mockery and swung the scimitar horizontally.

Throat slashed, the old man fell from the throne as a corpse.

"—Hierarch!"

Saladia screamed mournfully.

"—This throne *was mine in the first place.*"

Sitting down on the bloodstained throne, the witch snapped her fingers.

Immediately, powerful cult troops entered from the great hall's open door.

"Find the surviving royals and throw them in prison. Kill anyone who resists, I don't care. Oh, but don't kill any princess maidens, or the princess general fallen over there. Accomplished elementalists still have value for certain uses."

"...Doing this, royal sister, what are you planning!?"

Collapsed in a pool of blood, Saladia yelled.

"Ahhh?"

"The continent's various nations will condemn this coup d'etat. Royal sister, you have provided the wolves with a perfect pretext to invade the Theocracy!"

Suspected of connections to the Demon King cult, the Alphas Theocracy was frequently decried by neighboring countries. In spite of that, it had successfully remained free from large scale invasions owing to the diplomatic prowess of Rajihal Kahn—the hierarch who was now lying dead before the throne.

"Pretext huh—"

Sjora Kahn scoffed.

"I am the one looking for a pretext. I want to ignite the fires of war on this continent."

"Wha... Why, why are you doing that—"

"Kukuku, need I spell it out? It is the Demon King's mission!"

"..."

The clear-cut voice rendered Saladia Kahn speechless.

"Royal sister... You, what on earth..."

Muttering in shock, the second princess was arrested by the cult troops.

Part 2

After the cult troops were dismissed, in the king's room where there was no one else—

"—Congratulations, newest Hierarch. How splendid."

Suddenly, a figure appeared from the darkness.

Making an appearance was a cute young girl, roughly twelve or thirteen in age.

Blonde hair of dazzling golden luster. Violet eye color carrying an air of mystery. However, it was a lone eye—the left eye was covered by a simple eye patch.

The girl was wearing sacred vestments of pure white resembling what was worn by priests serving the Holy Lord.

The Holy Kingdom of Lugia's Cardinal—Millennia Sanctus.

Several months earlier, she had been sent to as a diplomat to the Theocracy to make contact with the Demon King cult within its borders.

Through her, the Demon King cult had obtained financial support from the Holy Kingdom.

"Personally, I am utterly disappointed. To think that the residence of the Demon King who once shook the continent would fall so easily—"

"Without being able to use spirits, even the royal guard is nothing."

The girl reached to the eye patch on her left then exposed her left eye.

Inside the clear, violet eye, horrifying darkness was squirming restlessly.



"Hey, that is—"

Witnessing the sight, Sjora gasped and whispered.

"Residing within you is that *darkness not of this world* huh."

—Indeed. What made the royal guard and Saladia's spirits go mad was this girl's eye.

The demon eye of pitch black, causing everything within its sight to go insane.

Madness brought forth ever more madness, filling the entire palace within the blink of an eye.

"True darkness that caused the Elemental Lords to go mad. Bathed in such darkness, the only ones capable of remaining unaffected are demon spirit minions that are mad to begin with—"

Smiling in this manner, perhaps this girl was the maddest one of all—

Sjora commented sardonically in her mind.

(—The cardinal sent by the Holy Kingdom huh.)

This girl was definitely not acting alone. Most likely, she was backed by the Holy Kingdom's highest decision-making agency, Des Esseintes.

"The reward you seek—No, the Holy Kingdom's reward are militarized spirits, right?"

"—Yes. The Theocracy's strategic-class militarized spirits, seven of them, more or less."

"—Seven huh. Certainly no lack of greed there."

Seven strategic-class militarized spirits. Military force capable of annihilating within a single night a city where spirit knights were stationed. Furthermore, using militarized spirits required gathering sufficient numbers of elementalists.

"Elementalists are not needed. Furthermore, new Hierarch, you must have confiscated all the militarized spirits gathered by Rubia Elstein, haven't you?"

"Hmph, your investigations are quite thorough..."

Rubia Elstein had sent combatants originating from the now-defunct Instructional School, such as Jio Inzagi, to various ruins in an attempt to build up her own personal army.

However, Rubia's ally, the Demon King cult had betrayed her and taken possession of the militarized spirits and the Instructional School's assassins.

"A number of them were broken by Muir Alenstarl's use, but even so, Rubia Elstein should still have a number of militarized spirits, right?"

"What is your goal? The Holy Kingdom's dog?"

Sjora stared down sharply at the young girl.

The darkness residing in Millennia Sanctus's eye wavered slightly.

"Hierarch-sama, are you aware that the Burial Chamber has manifested underground at Areishia Spirit Academy?"

"Who do you take me for?"

The Burial Chamber—a treasure vault bestowed to eligible Demon Kings.

A special dimension where the Demon King's weapons and the seventy-two spirits under his command were sealed.

Manifesting in the world upon the Demon King's awakening to confer upon him the power to rule the world.

"Excuse my impudence. Then the same goes for the matter of the Demon Slayer being sealed in the Burial Chamber?"

"...Apparently so."

Sjora nodded bitterly.

Originally not the Demon King's possession, now that the Demon Slayer was kept in the Burial Chamber, this meant that the burial chamber had recognized Kazehaya Kamito as the legitimate Demon King.

(...As much as it infuriates me, there is nothing I can do about it for now.)

Currently, *he* was nothing more than a mass of obstructing thoughts possessing Sjora Kahn's body.

Although an eligible Demon King candidate carrying Darkness Elemental Lord Ren Ashdoll's power, the power conferred was only comparable to that of the Demon King failure, Nepenthes Lore. As the top Demon King candidate, it was perfectly logical for Kazehaya Kamito to be chosen.

As for the Demon Slayer becoming the Demon King's personal sword, that was quite ironic—

"—My lord seeks the Demon Slayer."

"Hmph, what does the Grand Master of Des Esseintes want with that thing?"

"None of your business. Hierarch-sama."

Millennia smiled... Apparently with no intention of answering.

"Hmph, so be it. But then, how should one steal that sword spirit? It is the highest level sword spirit after all, despite its incomplete state. Even my Bandersnatch cannot steal it."

"—A fair enough point. Assuming normal conditions."

"Huh?"

"Kazehaya Kamito is currently in a state of amnesia. In other words, his connection to the sword spirit is suspended."

"—I see."

If Kamito was unable to make the sword spirit manifest, then there was the possibility of stealing the sacred sword's physical form that had materialized

in the Burial Chamber. However—

"The Burial Chamber manifested underground at Areishia. Its surroundings are covered by the unassailable spirit forest, with defensive barriers of the highest class and guardian spirits. The town at the foot of the mountain is also garrisoned by a standard Ordesian army. Even using seven militarized spirits, that stronghold cannot possibly be conquered."

"Worry not. Even the most secure stronghold will be fragile in the face of an attack launched from within. The *eye* of Des Esseintes is omnipresent."

Millennia Sanctus licked her lips and smiled with a chuckle.

Chapter 4 - Demon King's Burial Chamber

Part 1

"...The Instructional School... destroyed?"

In Claire's room in the Raven Class dorms—

Listening to her, Kamito was muttering in shock.

The bed could be heard compressing where he was sitting.

"No way... That kind of thing..."

"—It's true."

However, Claire shook her head candidly.

According to her—

Four years ago, the Instructional School was destroyed due to a certain sealed spirit running amok. All the instructors were killed by spirits while the majority of orphans went into the Empire's custody.

After that, the facility was utterly destroyed by the Empire's knights and wiped off the map completely.

Literally, it became a place that no longer existed on the map.

...Unbelievable. Suddenly informed of this, Kamito found it utterly impossible to believe.

However—

(...She knows of the Instructional School's existence.)

That was absolutely impossible originally.

The Instructional School's existence was absolutely kept hidden from the outside world.

Even for the children of nobles, this was not information a mere student

would be able to obtain.

Furthermore—

"This is proof—"

Saying that, Claire dumped a stack of materials on the table.

"These were taken from the library's materials room. Although I wasn't able to take out the most important secret documents, these should be enough."

"..."

Kamito read the materials ravenously.

He had no lack of doubts regarding the possibility that he had fallen into an elaborately disguised trap.

However, the large amount of information corroborated the veracity of her words.

These documents were real. They recorded information that only internal personnel would know—logs of combat operations and the names of the associated combatants.

(...To think that this type of document would be kept somewhere so easily within a student's reach.)

—Apart from that, the date was even more shocking.

(...This really happened four years ago.)

Currently, Kamito's remaining memories roughly covered from age five to twelve.

All memories dating before that period had been thoroughly wiped. Those that came after were also gone.

He already knew the fact of his amnesia. But even though he knew in his heart—

He never expected his last memory to be four years ago.

"I know you're confused but this is reality. See—"

Claire pointed at Kamito.

"Your body has grown in height."

"...Eh?"

Only after it was pointed out did he realize.

So that was why there was strange sense of dissonance ever since he woke up.

It felt like he could not move his body freely.

After realizing this fact, it felt quite incredible.

...He finally understood the reason behind it.

(...That's right, I've grown.)

His physique differed from what he remembered.

This was the physique of a fifteen or sixteen-year-old boy.

"I..."

In shock, Kamito looked down at his hands and feet.

Watching Kamito with eyes of pity, Claire spoke up:

"—Anyway, let me tell you what happened in these four years."

Part 2

While cautiously choosing her words—

Claire recounted Kamito's experiences to this date.

After the Instructional School was destroyed, wandering all over the place without anywhere he belonged to, Kamito was taken in by the Dusk Witch and enrolled into this Academy as the continent's one and only male

elementalist. Then as a member of Team Scarlet, he had participated in the Blade Dance.

"...I entered the Blade Dance?"

Kamito muttered with an expression of disbelief.

It was the continent's biggest festival that was only held every few years or decades.

For an Instructional School's combatant living in the dark side, it was a completely foreign world.

"Undoubtedly. Thanks to you, Kamito, we obtained victory. However—"

During the Blade Dance's finale, Kamito was injured when engaging the Strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell in blade dance, suffering damage to his memory.

"So that means that this contracted spirit also, at the time—"

Kamito's gaze fell upon his right hand.

Branded on the back of the hand was the spirit seal belonging to the sword spirit he had contracted in the underground cavern at this school.

The facility's instructors absolutely forbade Kamito from forming spirit contracts.

When the time is ripe, we'll give you the strongest spirit—That was what they had promised.

(The strongest spirit huh...)

Throb—

His head began to hurt again.

...Again. Again when thinking about spirits—

"Kamito, are you okay?"

"Yeah... Just a headache..."

Claire asked with worry at the sight of Kamito holding his temples.

"Maybe I said too much at once. Or perhaps when you tried to recall your memories, it caused a rejection reaction."

At this moment, she saw the seal on Kamito's hand.

"Eh?"

Claire showed a surprised expression.

"No way, this..."

"What's the problem?"

"No, nothing, nothing at all..."

Claire shook her head in denial.

(...What is she hiding?)

Although a bit concerned, Kamito did not press the matter much.

"Can this contracted spirit be summoned?"

Instead, he asked something else.

Having lost his memory, Kamito did not know how to summon a spirit. However, if Claire were to teach him, he might be able to recall the feeling and perform a successful summon.

"...Probably not. Est is currently in a materialized state and sealed underground at the Academy. Currently, we have to wait for the headmistress to authorize the unsealing."

"Why is the spirit underground?"

Unsummoned spirits were supposed to return to Astral Zero instead.

"That I'm not too sure about. But Est had been living in this place for the past few centuries. She's a special sealed spirit..."

"...Sealed spirit huh. So it's actually possible to contract with that kind of thing."

Spirits sealed in ancient artifacts had a tendency to be ill-tempered and would harm humans.

Unless overflowing with confidence, one would not make a move on them—

Kamito looked at the spirit seal on his right hand again.

Although the result was a runaway reaction—

(Sword spirit, do you really intend to protect me?)

At this moment, a meow was heard from within the room.

"...?"

Kamito turned his head to see a hell cat spirit in the kitchen heating a pot.

"Oh, the stew seems to be warmed up."

Claire stood up from the chair, her twintails swaying and hurried over to the kitchen.

Soon, she came back with a dish of stew.

...Kamito could smell a fragrant aroma. Beetroot stew with herbs scattered on top.

Kamito's throat gurgled.

"This is?"

"Borscht. A local dish from the Laurenfrost region. Rinslet... The girl who uses a wolf-shaped spirit taught me how to make it."

Kamito tried a mouthful of stew.

Thanks to the deadly cookie, Kamito was quite wary this time, however—

".....This is good."

Although the salt content seems to be wrong, it was good enough for an empty stomach.

"...!"

The twintails swayed happily.

"...Th-Thank goodness."

Then she breathed a sigh of relief.

"Actually, I was wondering if it would turn into charcoal."

"Ch-Charcoal?"

"Because until Nee-sama taught me how to use flames, I've never been able to control the intensity. All I knew was how to manipulate the power of flames to use for attack magic."

"Oh, so you have an older sister."

"Yes. Nee-sama was also saved by you, Kamito."

"...Sorry, I don't remember."

Kamito quietly put down the spoon.

"...Claire Rouge. What should I do next?"

He had no idea when his memory would recover.

Right now, all Kamito knew were the combat skills he had mastered at that facility.

What should his goal be next, to be honest, he had absolutely no idea.

"Life here isn't bad at all. Before your memory recovers, just relax and recuperate for now."

Part 3

"...So, how is Kamito-san's condition?"

With hair tied up, Rinslet asked with worry.

Late that night, Claire and the girls had gathered at the large communal bath to discuss how to proceed.

Due to how late it was, the bath was essentially monopolized by them.

On the other side of the steam, Fenrir was swimming leisurely.

"He's currently sleeping in my room, looking quite exhausted. I don't think he'll escape again."

"To think he even forgot Est..."

As Fianna sighed, her bosom quivered while floating on the water surface.

"Probably, the greater one's place in his heart, the greater the power causing memories to be forgotten. Otherwise, his mind would break..."

"Speaking of which, how did this morning's commotion end?"

Rinslet turned to Ellis and asked.

"The Knights have handled it appropriately. Actually, the incident should have been taken care of before a commotion happened. In the end, it became a huge mess."

Ellis murmured with a depressed look.

"...I-I might be hated by Kamito now."

"I did try to explain the truth of the incident. I don't think you need to worry."

It was possible that Kamito might not have a good impression of Ellis and the Sylphid Knights who were trying to capture him.

"U-Umm..."

Rinslet spoke up again.

"What?"

"I knew it, at this rate—this kind of thing, cannot be possible, right?"

...Hearing this, everyone fell silent.

They were probably all thinking the same thing.

(His memory must be recovered, I know this very well in my heart. But—)

If his amnesia persisted, perhaps Kamito could forget everything and live a peaceful life at the Academy.

"...That would require Kamito-kun's own decision."

Fianna murmured.

"No matter what..."

In any case, Claire coughed once.

"...All along, it was always Kamito who protected us."

She stood up from the bath and clenched her fist.

"Therefore, this time it's our turn to protect Kamito."

"Yes." "That's right." "Indeed!"

Everyone nodded vigorously.

...Yes, when a friend was in need, everyone would pitch in to help.

Like when all members of Team Scarlet fought victoriously throughout the Blade Dance.

However, one thing bothered Claire.

Just now, when she saw the seal on Kamito's right hand...

(That spirit seal, why...)

Instead of Terminus Est's emblem with the two intersecting swords—

Never seen before, *the seal's emblem consisted of a sword and a moon intersecting.*

Part 4

"—Thus concludes the report on Kamito, Headmistress."

In the headmistress' office where moonlight was streaming in—

Greyworth was listening to the report from Freya the teacher.

This was about Kamito's escape commotion that morning. Despite running low on stamina, he had unexpectedly sprang into action as soon as he woke up.

Thanks to that, there were even rumors of him peeking at girls changing.

"...What a lad who only causes trouble."

"Indeed that is so."

Facing the wryly smiling Greyworth, Freya sighed.

"Rumors of the king of lust's revival have already spread throughout the Academy. Not limited to the young ladies in his team, he even intends to devour all the girls in the Academy, seriously..."

"That would be troubling. Girls who have lost their purity are no longer fit to be elementalists."

"If that were to happen, this Academy would be ruined as a school."

Freya nodded without any change in expression.

(...Oh well, but through this, one thing is made clear.)

Greyworth shifted her sitting posture.

Unexpectedly—

Kamito did not cause any direct injuries to the Academy's girls.

Take for example, the two members of the Knights who collapsed in front of Kamito's room.

When Ellis discovered them, although they had lost consciousness, this was

due to the phenomenon of divine power intoxication from being struck by a large amount of divine power. Physically, they had not suffered any harm at all.

Also, when discovered by the students, he had not taken combat measures.

An Instructional School's assassin would have murdered them without hesitation. Had Kamito tried to escape at all costs, by any means necessary, that could very well have happened.

(...The lad is subconsciously taking care not to harm students.)

Even having lost memories about Restia, the human heart she had conferred to him was not lost—Was that the case here?

(...Hmph, enviable darkness spirit.)

"Headmistress?"

"Ahhh, sorry. So, how's the lad?"

"Sleeping in Claire Rouge's room. Let's hope nothing wrong comes out of it."

"...Hmph, if only the lad had the talent to do wrong. Oh well, whatever. Just leave things to those girls for now."

Greyworth smiled wryly but her smile quickly vanished.

"—So, how about that Demon Slayer's situation?"

"Yes, just as you predicted, Headmistress, when the reconnaissance team attempted spirit vision, they observed a dimensional disturbance that was not supposed to exist in the underground cavern."

"...I see. As expected."

"Headmistress, what exactly is that dimension...?"

"The Burial Chamber—"

Greyworth whispered.

"...?"

"—Granted to the Demon King's legitimate successor, a legendary treasure vault."

Chapter 5 - Invader

Part 1

...Nibble.

"Hmm... Mmm..."

...Nibble nibble.

"...?"

Feeling a numb sensation on his fingertip, Kamito woke up.

"...What's happening?"

Rubbing his sleepy eyes, he lifted the blanket, only to see...

A cat in his bed under the covers.

A flaming hell cat. Claire Rouge's spirit.

It was biting Kamito's finger lightly.

"What are you doing?"

Just as he asked with a frown, the hell cat leaned its body against him in an intimate manner.

Carrying flames of divine power, it felt very warm.

"...Could it be that you're warming my bed?"

"Meow..."

The hell cat spirit seemed to be meowing affirmatively. It kept licking Kamito's fingers.

"..."

Contracted spirits did not get affectionate with anyone apart from their own contractors.

This common sense knowledge was overturned a second time.

(Other people's contracted spirits are acting affectionately with me huh...)

What kind of person was he before losing his memory—

"...~S-Scarlet, what are you doing!?"

Suddenly, the bathroom door opened and Claire appeared in her uniform.

The hell cat spirit jumped down from bed and frantically ran over.

"...Seriously, Scarlet, you like playing pranks too much."

Rubbing her wet hair, Claire approached.

"...No, the spirit only seemed to be helping to warm me up."

"Eh?"

Wavering signs appeared on Claire's face.

"...~Th-That child, when did she start getting so affectionate..."

"Who knows..."

Scratching his head, Kamito took his time getting up.

...Sleeping for who knows how long after that. The morning sun's rays streamed into the room.

"After a night's sleep, is your mind awake now?"

"...I guess."

But the blank in his memories remained.

"Next, there's class. Come along as well, Kamito."

"...Class?"

Part 2

"How do you remember this kind of path?"

"You get used to it very quickly if you walk along it every day."

Her twintails swaying, Claire answered without looking back.

Changed into the Academy's uniform, Kamito was walking in a long hallway following after Claire.

Claire had effortlessly passed through the place where Kamito had gotten lost yesterday.

"Today's class is continental history. Compared to spirit studies, I guess it's a class you're relatively good at."

"Yeah. I have been taught continental history to a certain extent."

The Instructional School's assassins did not need to learn nonessential knowledge.

However, knowledge necessary for infiltration missions were taught after all.

"...That said, the stuff I know are just on the level of common sense."

At this moment, Claire stopped walking and looked back.

"Speaking of which, could you stop using *boku* as a first person pronoun?"[\[1\]](#)

"...What do you mean?"

"Kamito, you've always been using *ore* to refer to yourself."

"I see."

"Yeah. It'll be troublesome if other people noticed, so you'd better change it back."

Kamito's memory loss was apparently kept a secret from the Academy's students.

Suddenly changing first person pronouns could raise suspicions in the other students.

"Got it. I'll start using *ore* to refer to myself."

Despite finding the use of an unfamiliar term of self-address a bit troubling,

Kamito still nodded.

After walking a while, they reached a large classroom.

As soon as they opened the door, all the students sitting at their seats looked at Kamito together.

Most of the gazes expressed puzzlement. Signs of curiosity and wariness were also obvious to see.

Among them, there were quite a few enthusiastic gazes mixed in.

"It's Kamito the king of lust." "I heard that he holds blade dance of the night every night." "Is it really true that he calls himself the Sex Elemental Lord?"

"Oh no, that's blasphemy to the great elemental lords." "A girl from Fox Class was apparently accosted and asked, allow me to become your contracted sex spirit." "What, that's deplorable!"

Kamito was able to hear these whispers.

(B-Before losing my memory, how much of a fiend was I?)

Suddenly, the lectern was tapped loudly.

"Private talk is not allowed. Kazehaya Kamito and Claire Rouge, hurry and sit down."

As the teacher in the suit gave a shout, the whispering voices gradually subsided.

Together with Claire, Kamito frantically took a seat in the last row.

"She's the homeroom teacher, Freya. A shadow elementalist."

Claire whispered quietly.

"Kamito-san, are you okay already?"

A greeting came from behind. Hearing it, he turned his head back...

Only to see the platinum-blonde young lady whom he had taken hostage

yesterday.

...He recalled her name to be Rinslet.

"...Yeah. Uh, sorry about yesterday."

"No, don't mind that, it could not be helped. We are the ones who ought to apologize for chasing you relentlessly."

Rinslet bowed her head deeply and apologized.

Kamito had expected her to be an arrogant and spoilt young lady but she turned out to be surprisingly upfront and gentle.

"Before your memory recovers, we will assist you. Please don't be shy. Of course, perverted things excepted!"

"...? Y-Yeah, got it."

Faced with the blushing young lady, Kamito nodded in puzzlement.

"Kamito-sama, what milady meant just now was please do not hold back on asking about adult things."

"Carol, w-what are you talking about!?"

"Fufufu..."

Rinslet hammered her fists on the back of the giggling maid.

...That said, why was there a maid in the classroom in the first place?

"Hold on, you're being too noisy!"

Claire glared back at the two.

"As expected, Rinslet-san has already fallen into his fiendish grasp..."

"Including the maid for a sandwich situation."

The girls' cold stares pierced Kamito.

Part 3

After the lecture on continental history, Kamito's entourage went for a late breakfast.

"Kamito, does this bore you?"

"No, it's quite interesting although there's a lot that I don't get."

Quite interesting. This was not a lie.

Kamito found things in this area quite refreshing because he had little contact with outside knowledge. Furthermore, Freya's lecture was clear and easy to understand without requiring prerequisite knowledge.

"Perhaps she specially made it easier to understand for your sake, Kamito."

Saying that, Claire halted in a large round hall.

"...Is this place the dining hall? As expected of the high-class ladies' world.
Quite luxurious."

The hall contained many wooden chairs and tables. Girls were sitting there chatting amiably. The tables even had baskets filled with bread.

"Kamito-sama, this is not a dining hall but a cafeteria."

Carol informed.

"What's the difference?"

"The dining hall is at another building, it's a formal restaurant. This place only provides all-you-can-eat refreshments such as baked bread and coffee."

While taking a seat at a nearby table, Claire explained.

"All-you-can-eat?"

Kamito was shocked... It was inconceivable that all this tasty looking bread was all-you-can-eat. Unbelievable.

"This is an academy for the children of nobles after all. It's perfectly natural."

Rinslet also sat down next to Carol.

"I like the bread here a lot. This bread here with the jam filling is very delicious."

Saying that, Claire tore a piece of bread in half and handed it to Kamito.

"...This is good!"

"I know right... Yumm♪"

"Yeah. I've never eaten any bread this good at the place where I used to live."

Kamito chewed his bread while speaking.

"..."

"...Hmm, what's the matter?"

It felt like the surrounding atmosphere had frozen.

"Ah, yeah... G-Good point..."

"M-M-Mere bread, I could make it every day for you."

"Yes, spoken like a true marriage proposal, milady."

"Carol! Th-That's not right!"

Rinslet screamed, blushing intensely.

Seeing the way Kamito's group acted, girls sitting nearby began to whisper again.

At this moment, abundant cheers could be heard coming from outside the building.

"What's going on?"

"Her Highness the Imperial Princess is getting ready for the gate opening ritual."

"The imperial princess?"

Kamito looked out the window.

On a gentle hill side, a girl was performing a dance. She seemed familiar.

It was the girl who gave him the cookie yesterday.

"Fianna Ray Ordesia. Her Highness the Empire's second princess."

"...Her Highness the princess!?"

Kamito recalled what he had done to the girl yesterday.

Gruffly pushing her down in the corridor, he had intended to take her hostage.

"Uh, will I be sentenced to death—"

"Normally speaking, yes. Oh well, but since it's Fianna, don't worry about it."

"...R-Really?"

Kamito muttered, not entirely convinced.

"The ritual's preparations seem to be going very smoothly."

"What kind of preparations?"

"Preparations for the Gate that the spirits will use for the Great Festival of the Spirits tomorrow."

"...Great Festival of the Spirits?"

Hearing the unfamiliar term, Kamito frowned.

"A day where the entire Academy expresses gratitude to the spirits. Simply stated, it's the school festival."

"Because there's the Blade Dance this year, it was rescheduled."

"School festival..."

For Kamito who grew up in the Instructional School, school festivals were completely foreign as well. On the other hand, bloody celebratory events

such as the Festival of the Death Dance and the Festival of Blood Splattering Battles did take place.

"Raven Class is preparing for a cafe imitation shop."

"Well, although it's slightly different from a normal cafe..."

Claire sighed. —At this moment...

"Kamito, so you are here!"

At the hall's entrance, a ponytailed girl was speaking.

"...!"

Hearing her, Kamito could not help but stand up from his chair.

It was Ellis Fahrengart, the knight's captain who intended to capture Kamito yesterday.

Ellis approached the table where Kamito's group was at.

"...S-Sorry about yesterday."

Unexpectedly, she bowed her head and apologized.

"As the leader of the Sylphid Knights, I had no choice yesterday."

"...Y-Yeah, I got it. I should be the one to say sorry."

Kamito bowed his head as well.

He was the one who escaped after all. She was simply fulfilling her duties.

"Ellis, you came for breakfast too?"

"No, I came to find Kamito."

"...W-What for?"

Claire's eyebrow rose in response.

"Kamito, you are a member of the Sylphid Knights. You have to assist with security for the Great Festival of the Spirits."

"Hold on, Kamito still hasn't recovered his memory."

"It cannot be helped. The Knights are shorthanded as well."

"...~Th-That won't do. Kamito must stay with me—"

"—No, I get it."

Kamito interrupted.

"...Kamito?"

"I want to work as much as possible. Also, I owe her a favor for the trouble I caused yesterday."

"I-I see!" "W-Wait up!"

Ellis's face relaxed while Claire grew frantic.

"Well then, I shall borrow Kamito for now."

Taking Kamito arm in arm, Ellis actively leaned against him.

"H-Hey, your chest is touching me..."

"...~I hate this, Kamito is such a jerk!"

"Captain, that's so unfair!"

The two girls' voices could be heard from behind.

Part 4

The Academy town was located at the foot of the mountain where Areishia Spirit Academy was located.

At its gates, a pair of strangely dressed people were standing there.

Gray overcoats covering the entire body. Hoods that covered their heads and faces completely.

"—The Empire's premier institution for nurturing elementalists. It's been a long time since I last visited."

"Oh dear, how unexpected."

"After all, we spend most of our time outside the Empire."

The shorter of the pair answered and walked towards the entrance.

"Hold on, Virrey, entering requires proper procedures."

"What a pain. Also—"

"I'd like to test this Academy's security level—"

"Name yourself, visitors—"

Suddenly, the space above the door distorted and a giant metal knight appeared.

Made entirely of steel and clad in armor, carrying a double-edged blade as big as a log.

This was the guardian spirit contracted to the Academy city.

"Hmph, a knight spirit huh. Another straitlaced—"

The girl grumbled with annoyance.

"Warning. Unauthorized persons are prohibited from entering—"

"Shut up."

Instantly, numerous flashes of light were released from under the gray overcoat.

"Oh... Oh... Ohhhh, you... bastard..."

Pierced with many holes all over, the knight spirit left final words of chagrin before vanishing.

This all happened in an instant.

"How could their level be so low? This makes it evident how capable these Sylphid Knights actually are."

"Virrey, come on..."

The other person sighed helplessly.

"Do you think this will cause Kazehaya Kamito to appear?"

"Who knows? He is listed under the Sylphid Knights, but whether he is on duty or not, no idea."

"...Hmm, is there a need to cause an even greater commotion?"

"Ah, h-hold on, stop it!"

Ignoring her companion's efforts to stop her, the girl entered the Academy town.

Part 5

"H-Hey..."

Dragged by the arm by Ellis, Kamito was walking through the Academy's courtyard.

Ellis was silent all along. Perhaps it was his imagination, but her face looked a little red.

"K-Kamito..."

Finally, she spoke up.

"U-Umm, how is your memory? Have you recalled anything?"

Kamito shook his head.

"...Nothing. I've heard about recent events from Claire but my memory still hasn't recovered... Sorry."

"I see. If there is anything you are unclear, please feel free to ask me. I will surely assist you."

Her stern dark-brown eyes stared straight at him.

Although it felt a little forceful sometimes, surely it ultimately stemmed from

her righteous and honest personality, right?

"Speaking of which..."

Kamito suddenly recalled and asked:

"I remember you calling yourself my fiancée. What do you mean by that?"

"...~!"

Ellis instantly went bright red in the face.

"N-No! Th-That is a misunderstanding!"

In a panic, she shook her head forcefully.

"I-It was my grandfather who decided on his own, i-ignoring your opinion, sorry..."

Her voice grew more and more quiet.

"Ellis, your grandfather, could it be..."

The Empire's chief advisor on military affairs—Duke Cygnus Fahrengart.

A person whom Kamito had heard of despite his meager knowledge of the continent.

"Hmm. After witnessing your blade dancing at the Blade Dance festival, my grandfather decided to make you my fiancée. O-Of course, this does not sit too well with me..."

"...I see."

Ellis's grandfather had apparently ignored her will and decided on the engagement. A decision based on swordsmanship without worrying about status or origins—This was quite in line with a military family's style. But from Ellis's perspective, it was probably difficult to accept lightly.

If the claim of an engagement were true, Kamito originally considered the possibility of taking responsibility or something like that.

"Th-This sort of thing should respect both people's wishes. So..."

Ellis awkwardly twiddled with her fingers.

"...I understand."

"Huh?"

"Let's meet the Duke next time. I will try to convince your grandfather."

"...Wha! R-Really!?"

"Yeah. Once my memory recovers, I'll do my best not to give you any trouble."

"K-Kamito..."

Ellis's eyes turned moist and her face went red.

"Ah, ooh... E-Entrusted to you... Eternally."

(...Eh?)

Was there some sort of great misunderstanding on his part—

Instantly, this disturbing notion flashed across his mind—

At this moment, two girls in armor hurried over.

"Oh, it's the captain—"

"Oh dear, are you on a date with Kazehaya Kamito?"

"N-No, you fools!"

Ellis frantically released Kamito's arm and distanced herself.

Then her gaze fell upon their hands.

Both girls had released their elemental waffen.

"...Hmm, has something happened?"

"Just now, the guardian spirit at the Academy town's main entrance stopped reacting."

"Guardian spirit?"

"Although it's possible that the spirit returned temporarily to Astral Zero because the contract became unstable due to the approaching Great Festival of the Spirits. But just to be safe, it's better to check out the situation."

"I see. Perhaps the contract medium has been damaged. Investigate thoroughly."

"Orders received!"

The two girls nodded slightly and ran again.

—Suddenly, the short-haired girl stopped and turned towards Ellis.

"Oh, captain. *What was mentioned previously* is already prepared in the wardrobe at headquarters."

"I-Is that so? Got it."

Cough cough, Ellis coughed and nodded.

"...Those two just now are Rakka and Reishia, my friends."

"You're quite respected, Ellis."

"...H-Hmph, okay, let us be on our way."

Grabbing Kamito's arm again, Ellis set off again.

Part 6

The Sylphid Knights' headquarters was an ancient building modified from an old church.

Kamito opened the entrance's heavy iron door to see a vast sky-blue ceiling with many conference tables beneath. This was a boring place that prioritized practicality.

"No one's here?"

"It's the day before the Great Festival of the Spirits after all. Everybody is out

on duty."

Ellis explained while walking into the church.

"Not enough manpower?"

"It is already much better. Thanks to you."

"...Me?"

"Yes. You defeated my adopted elder sister in the school competition, led Team Scarlet to emerge victorious at the Blade Dance, thereby increasing the number of volunteers joining the Knights. Of course, no matter how shorthanded we are, we cannot accept everyone without scrutiny."

Saying that, Ellis stopped before a wardrobe by the wall and opened the lock.

"This is your equipment."

Ellis handed over the same kind of sword belt and sword she was wearing at her waist.

"Perhaps this might be a little redundant for those who are capable of using elemental waffen, but it is equivalent to a symbol proving membership in the Knights. Made of mithril after all, it is capable of fighting spirits once you inject divine power into it."

Kamito took the sword and swung it lightly.

"Uh, can I go without stuff like armor?"

"Regrettably, there are no male versions. If there is a need, it could be custom made."

"...No, I don't have any need for it."

"I see."

Nodding, Ellis reached towards Kamito's chest.

"Okay, here is the Knight's crest."

She pinned a crest, shining with golden luster.

"...Suits you great, Kamito."

The crest seemed to be infused with some kind of magic. Kamito could feel a slight amount of divine power from it.

"B-By the way, I have a favor to ask of you..."

"A favor?"

"H-Hmm... I would like your help in taking a look at the ornamental armor I will be wearing at the Great Festival of the Spirits."

Ellis coughed and spoke.

"Ornamental, so it's different from your current equipment?"

"Yes. After all, it is the Great Festival of the Spirits, held only once a year. As customarily in past years, the captain has to wear special attire."

"...I see. I understand that part, but why ask me?"

"W-Well, uh..."

Ellis's face went bright red instantly.

But soon, she glared at Kamito—

"Captain's orders. A-Any objections?"

"A-Affirmative..."

Feeling signs that she was about to draw her sword, Kamito frantically nodded.

"Okay. Then wait here a moment."

Saying that, Ellis turned her heels and went through a small door deeper inside.

(...What's going on?)

He could hear the friction of clothing from inside the room.

Then after waiting like this for a while—

"Ah, ooh... W-What, is this...!?"

Suddenly, he heard a scream from inside.

"What's the matter?"

"Ah, ooh... Uh... This is too embarrassing..."

"...Embarrassing?"

Did she mean the ornamental armor she was wearing?

Just as questions surfaced in Kamito's mind—

Ellis timidly opened the room's door.

"...!"

Ellis's current getup forced Kamito to hold his breath.

"...Ah... Ooohhh..."

Hiding behind the door in the shadows, Ellis was rubbing her smooth thighs together.

Clear white complexion. Covering her lower body, the armor was no different from underwear. Her massive bust was covered by nothing more than a breastplate consisting of a small piece of metal.

Although it was ritual attire, in terms of armor, this design was excessively impractical.

"T-To think that such shameless armor existed... D-Does this not make me an exhibitionist..."

Blushing to her ears, Ellis placed her arms over her breasts that looked like they were about to pop out.

"You didn't pick it yourself?"

"A-Assuredly not! I-I was deceived by Rakka and Reishia!"

Shouting, Ellis swung her sword.

"Uwah!"

Seeing that, Kamito turned and evaded—

Losing balance and falling forwards, Ellis pounced on him.

Boing.

"...Mmmmmmmph!"

Pinned down by the large and soft bosom, Kamito was about to suffocate.

"K-Kamito!? S-Sorry..."

Ellis frantically tried to get up, but could not stand steadily, apparently unaccustomed to the armor.

Boing. Boing boing.

"Ah... Ooh♪ K-Kamito... Where are you touching... Ah♪"

Tears welled up in her dark-brown eyes as Ellis moaned in suffering.

"...H-Hey...!"

Kamito's face began to burn hot.

(W-What is this feeling...!?)

Confronted with the sight of Ellis's unsuited apparel, his heart was pounding hard.

"K-Kamito..."

Ellis looked at Kamito with a serious expression.

"...N-No way, your heart is racing?"

Ellis touched the location of Kamito's heart with her fingers.

...The heart's intense beating apparently transmitted to her.

"Y-Yeah..."

Kamito answered honestly.

"Seeing me dressed in such an unsightly manner, y-you're getting excited?"

"Uh, no, umm..."

Seeing Kamito shake his head frantically—

"I am not reprimanding you. Rather, I feel relieved."

Ellis showed a gentle gaze and smiled.

"...Huh?"

"Because you still retain your emotions even after losing your memory."

Kamito realized with surprise.

(...That really is true.)

After being abducted by the Instructional School, Kamito's memory and heart had been thoroughly destroyed.

He was educated that emotions were useless.

Then why was he feeling the turbulence of emotions now—?

Throb, throb, throb—

(...Guh... My head...)

"Kamito, a-are you okay?"

"Y-Yeah..."

Just as he held his temples and stood up...

An explosion was heard from outside the church.

"...What!?"

Part 7

Ellis kicked the church's door open.

"—Where?"

As soon as she spoke, the air shook.

The trees of the Spirit Forest extending out from the school building's surroundings were being uprooted together with a great amount of soil and dirt.

Appearing amidst the swirling dust storm was a giant all covered in rock.

"...That's an earth spirit?"

"It's Rakka's Cabracan—"

Rakka. Kamito recalled it was the girl from the Knights he had met just earlier.

"What's going on? Who is that spirit fighting?"

"No idea. However, it should not be a conflict between students. Duels on campus are prohibited by the school rules."

Ellis spoke in an urgent voice.

"Stand by here."

"...? I'll go too."

"It is dangerous. Right now, you are incapable of using your elemental waffe, right?"

"I have a sword. Plus I'm also a member of the Knights, right?"

Kamito tapped the sword at his waist.

In that instant, the giant roared.

An impact shook the atmosphere and the giant's rock-covered body was shattered.

"...Impossible, Rakka's Cabracan was!?"

Ellis exclaimed in shock. Kamito stared wide-eyed.

Earth spirits were particularly durable, to be crushed so easily—

(...Who on earth?)

Ellis still looked hesitant—

"...I understand. Please assist me."

But finally, she still nodded. Holding Kamito's hand...

"O wind, grant me protection—Fly!"

Chanting an incantation of spirit magic, a howling whirlwind began to blow.

Ellis kicked the ground lightly and the two of them flew high into the air.

"Uwah!"

"Hold on tight. Do not fall down."

She kicked a wall of air to accelerate. The two of them flew straight towards the Spirit Forest.

Arriving above the forest, she stopped nimbly and landed in one flowing motion.

"...C-Captain..."

Collapsed on the ground, Rakka could not help but moan.

"Rakka, what on earth happened...!?"

They were surrounded by fallen trees, probably the aftermath of the rock spirit's destruction.

"That bastard. That bastard did this to... me and Reishia..."

"...!?"

Rakka's gaze was directed to another collapsed girl in front.

"Reishia..."

Ellis could not help but cry out.

At this moment—

"Oh my oh my, to think that it would be this poor. The power of the Sylphid Knights guarding the Academy."

Thud—The sound of a boot striking the ground.

"...!?"

A petite hooded figure landed next to Reishia.

"...Who goes there!?"

Ellis yelled acutely.

"Trespassers in the Academy will be punished accordingly."

"Heh, who are the ones who watched helplessly as a third-rate character like Jio Inzagi invaded?"

"...How did you know—"

"Also—"

The hooded figure glared coldly at Ellis.

"What's with that getup? Have the Knights started wearing such shameless armor recently?"

"Ugh... Th-This is a misunderstanding!"

Blushing to her ears, Ellis pressed her legs together.

"I-In any case, I will make you regret hurting my companions—Come, Simorgh!"

With a yell, Ellis summoned her elemental waffe, a spear, readying herself for battle.

"Kamito, I will arrest the intruder. I will count on you to cover me."

"—Understood."

Kamito drew the sword at his waist and took a leap opposite to Ellis.

(...Although it's not a dagger like I'm used to, whatever—)

While running rapidly in a wide arc, he infused divine power into the blade.

With an eruption of blue-white lightning, the blade glowed faintly.

"Haaaah—"

Ellis swung Ray Hawk horizontally.

An invisible blade flew out, instantly slicing through the forest's trees.

"I see, a powerful elemental waffe. However—"

The attacker kicked a fallen tree into the air to locate the wind blade and evaded.

"Wha—!"

The gray overcoat fluttered.

She instantly landed in front of Ellis and released a power knee strike without any delay.

Ellis blocked the attack with her spear's shaft but losing balance severely, she slipped.

Seizing this opening, the attacker made an overarm stroke at her throat.

"That's not gonna happen!"

With explosive leg strength, Kamito jumped. Closing in instantly, he swung his sword.

—However, his actions were read. The enemy retreated nimbly and evaded the slash, then took a backstep to create distance and faced off against Kamito.

"Able to close in on such a distance in an instant, not too shabby at all—"
(...Evaded!?)

Kamito mentally clicked his tongue.

Even the Empire's top spirit knights should not be able to see through his motions.

Although this was partially due to his not being in peak condition, still...

"—Kamito, dodge!"

Ellis cried out from behind. Kamito instantly jumped sideways.

A giant wind storm gouged the ground as the impact advanced.

This massive attack was probably going to be dodged. However, the enemy only had limited space to do so—

"Do not underestimate the Sylphid Knights!"

Ellis opened her hand. Instantly, the wind storm exploded.

The attacker was blown away by the astounding gale and rolled on the ground.

Ellis instantly closed in and mercilessly attacked her opponent with a thrust.

Her attack brushed the edge of the hood.

A lock of severed black hair scattered in the wind.

"—As expected of the captain. Looks like you're different from the rest."

The attacker praised. Kamito also secretly counted his good fortune.

Evidently, Ellis had not gone all out when trying to catch Kamito yesterday.

Ellis's blade dancing skills were far beyond a typical student's level.

(But—)

Kamito's gaze turned back to the hooded attacker.

The opponent was still confident and had effort to spare. This was proven by the fact that no weapon had been drawn yet.

(...The level of the Instructional School's high rankers? No, even superior to that—?)

"Okay, just surrender obediently—"

Pulling her spear from the ground, Ellis readied it in a renewed stance.

"—Like I said, you're too inexperienced!"

The attacker swiftly turned, catching Ellis by the ankle and flooring her.

"—Ellis!"

Kamito turned his sword to a reverse grip and leaped, kicking the ground.

(Assassination technique—Snakes and Scorpions!)

Keeping a low stance, he zoomed across the ground, aiming at the enemy's feet.

The opponent jumped straight up to evade and his blade pierced the ground.

However, that first strike was bait. The key was—

(Assassination technique—Flying Snake!)

Swinging the blade, embedded in the ground, upwards all at once, he unleashed a slash with godly speed.

The slash traced out a vertical line, severing the hood and the overcoat in one cut.

"...What!?"

The overcoat covering the attacker's entire body fluttered to the ground.

Revealed was a young girl with a cute face, dressed in a magnificent battle outfit.

Her hair, cut short like a boy's, silently scattered.

Her eyes of amethyst, glinting brightly, glared sharply at Kamito.

"The unorthodox sword huh. How unsightly, Kazehaya Kamito—"

"...!?"

Instantly, Kamito found himself being pointed at by a weapon.

An unadorned weapon crafted from black iron.

(No way—)

Kamito had witnessed identical objects at the Instructional School.

Manufactured in the factories of the Kingdom of Balstan, this was the pinnacle of spirit engineering.

This was a destructive weapon that shot out spirit crystals at high speed through a reaction between pyromatter and divine power.

A handgun.

(—An Artificer huh!?)

An elementalist who used artifacts to fight instead of contracted spirits.

The muzzle flashed. Kamito hastily dodged—

However, upon striking the ground, the spirit crystal shattered. Howling, cold wind surrounded Kamito.

(...An ice spirit bullet!)

"Kamito!"

Ellis yelled. However, Kamito's figure was being covered entirely by the blizzard—

"...It's my win, Demon King Kamito!"[\[2\]](#)

The girl reloaded her gun.

This time, she loaded a bullet that was meant to defeat the enemy instead of

merely immobilizing them.

However—

"...What?"

The girl frowned in surprise.

Amidst the howling blizzard, an explosive flash of light appeared.

"...A-Ahhhhhhhhhh!"

Kamito's right hand's crest of the sword and moon was glowing.

"Stop it, Kamito! Dangerous—!"

Ellis's voice was heard beyond the blizzard.

(...I know, but... I can't control it...!)

This was not Kamito's own will.

In response to Kamito's crisis, a reverse flow of divine power was pouring back into him.

The massive divine power was expanding instantly within Kamito's body.

Then—

The rampant divine power erupted from his swinging right hand.

Part 8

"Kamito... Kamito, are you okay...!?"

"Ugh... Gah..."

Feeling someone shaking his shoulder, Kamito slowly opened his eyes.

Only to see Ellis's greatly worried face.

"...That girl?"

"After the Knights arrived, she fled... But she's likely still within the Academy."

"I see..."

Enduring the pain all over his body, Kamito pushed himself up.

Intense signs of burning were left on his right hand at the location of the spirit seal.

Translator's References and Notes

1. The Japanese language has many pronouns for different contexts. Compared to using *boku*, *ore* would be more informal or manly depending on context.
2. Note: the attacker uses the *boku* first person pronoun despite being a girl.

Chapter 6 - Numbers

Part 1

Meanwhile, in an empty classroom in the secondary block separate from the school building...

Having eaten breakfast, Claire and the others were preparing for the Great Festival of the Spirits.

"Jeez, Kamito is clearly my contracted spirit..."

"The captain is so sly!"

Dressed in their cafe uniforms, Claire and Rinslet were pouting.

They were dressed similar to maids while wearing decorated headbands. The decorations came with cute animal ears and were very popular with the spirits, known for their love of beautiful girls.

As a side note, Claire had cat ears while Rinslet's were those of a fox.

"Aha, you two are jealous."

Carol wiped the table while smiling.

"N-No way!" "Of course not!"

Hearing that, the two girls blushed intensely and frantically denied.

"Putting that aside, who knows if we'll be able to handle the customers properly tomorrow. Due to participating in the Blade Dance, we didn't even have time to practice much. I'm a bit worried."

"Don't offend the visiting nobles and spirits."

"I know that..."

Tomorrow, not only nobles but also many aristocratic spirits from Astral Zero were going to be visiting. Since high-ranking spirits wielded massive influence over the human realm, they definitely could not be treated lightly.

"Oh well, it would be bad to be overly self-aware and cause stiff expressions. I am cute enough as things stand already, so all I need to do next is practice smiling a little—Ouch."

Suddenly, Rinslet frowned.

"What's the matter?"

"The seal..."

"...!"

The rose seal branded on her left hand was flashing intensely.

"It must be *that esteemed one*."

"That esteemed one, could it be...!"

Claire instantly became nervous and looked at the surrounding students.

"Uh, Rinslet is feeling a little unwell, I'm going to accompany her to the infirmary to get some rest."

Then, grabbing Rinslet's left hand to hide it, she exited the classroom.

"Claire-sama, just allow me to accompany her instead."

Carol tried to help but Rinslet stopped her.

"I have important matters to discuss with Claire. Stay here, Carol."

"...Understood."

Carol bowed reverently. Useless as a maid usually, it was a great help that she instantly understood Rinslet's intentions during times like these.

Claire and Rinslet walked through the corridor to reach a first-floor classroom that was being used for storage.

"...There's no one listening here."

Confirming no presences around, not even spirits, Claire whispered.

The dim classroom was illuminated by the seal's dazzling light.

"...Fenrir!"

Rinslet called out the name of the demon ice spirit.

Instantly, a large magic circle appeared in midair, summoning the white direwolf.

Fenrir sat down on the dusty floor, supporting itself on its front limbs and opened its giant jaws—

"—Excuse the suddenness of this communication, princess maiden Ice Demon."

A calm voice came out.

"Y-Your dog can speak!?"

"A direwolf not a dog, okay!?"

Rinslet corrected rigorously.

"Ahhh, the Elstein princess maiden is present too. Perfect."

The person on the other side spoke using Fenrir.

Claire took a deep and sudden breath—

"Could it be... Iseria-sama?"

"Yes. Only through this demon ice spirit, I am able to make an appearance."

The wolf's head nodded once.

Claire and Rinslet frantically knelt down on the spot. Even when appearing in the form of an adorable wolf, she was still an Elemental Lord's avatar. The highest level of respect must be expressed.

Still in Fenrir's form, the Elemental Lord coughed lightly.

"My apologies. I originally intended to enter in a dialogue earlier but stabilizing my main body has already consumed all of my strength. Simply

opening the Gate took a great deal of effort."

Listening to the elemental lord, Claire and Rinslet looked at each other.

"...Speaking of which, are the Elemental Lords still in a state of insanity?"

Claire asked gingerly.

They had undertaken the Elemental Lord liberation plan during the audience.

Was the darkness spirit girl's sacrifice in vain—?

"I remember it was mentioned that the Fire Elemental Lord's madness was supposed to subside somewhat."

Rinslet also spoke up.

"Volcanicus has stabilized now. The Demon King's sacred sword did indeed succeed in liberating the Elemental Lord's consciousness from being swallowed by the darkness. Vanishing from the True Sanctuary, it was most likely reborn in an amnesiac state somewhere, presumably in the same manner as I was sealed underground in the abandoned city—"

"Successfully liberated, I see."

"Yes. But the Otherworldly Darkness's corruption continues. This is temporary respite at best. In the near and foreseeable future, it will most likely exceed the level where I can suppress it on my own."

"No way..."

"At least, if Alexandros and the liberated Volcanicus return, taking back the initiative should be possible, maybe."

Still in Fenrir's form, the elemental lord shook her head powerlessly.

"...The Holy Lord?"

Claire and Rinslet frowned at the same time.

Back then, Kamito was only supposed to have freed the Fire Elemental Lord.

"...The empty seat."

"Huh?"

"Three years ago, even before I was liberated, the Holy Lord's seat was already empty. As for when the absence started and where the Holy Lord had vanished to, I have no idea at all."

(...Liberated by someone else apart from Kamito?)

Claire tilted her head and wondered in her mind.

—The Holy Lord's unexplained disappearance.

There was an inexplicable sense of foreboding. As much as it was merely instinct, it was Claire's instinct after all, and Claire's potential as a princess maiden even exceeded her elder sister's. It could not be ignored.

(That said, it's useless no matter how much I tried to ponder this...)

Claire shook her head and asked the first question she should have raised.

"Excuse me, Iseria-sama, do you know anything about the situation of Kamito's darkness spirit?"

"Darkness spirit—You are referring to Restia Ashdoll, aren't you?"

The elemental lord whispered through the direwolf. As though choosing her words, the wolf cautiously spoke:

"The disappearance of that youth's spirit seal implies what has happened. Originally nothing more than the tool for realizing Darkness Elemental Lord Ren Ashdoll's will, she must have obtained a humanized heart through her interactions with that youth. In exchange for her own life, she saved the world. Rather, whom she saved was the youth, but in doing so, the world was saved as a bonus."

"I... see..."

The elemental lord's message was positive but merciless at the same time.

The darkness spirit was gone from this world. So long as reality was not rewritten—

Then even if Kamito recovered his memory, he would plunge into despair once more.

(...When the time comes, his mind and soul will surely collapse.)

Perhaps in consideration for Kamito, staying in his amnesiac state might be better—

Claire wondered.

"The Knights of the Holy Kingdom of Lugia are also searching for the whereabouts of the missing darkness spirit."

"Luminaris?"

During the final round of the Blade Dance, the Sacred Spirit Knights intended to exterminate the darkness spirit for some unknown reason. Their actions were almost as though they regarded the team's victory as irrelevant

—
(...After the Blade Dance ended, they were still looking for the darkness spirit?)

—What on earth for?

"Ignoring the Divine Ritual Institute's warnings, they persisted in staying on Ragna Ys. Only after repeated warnings did they finally give up on the search and made their return."

"Why do they know that Kamito lost his darkness spirit?"

"The Holy Kingdom of Lugia seems to be suspicious too..."

Claire spoke with her chin resting against her hand. At this moment—

"Speaking of which, how is the youth's condition now?"

Iseria asked.

"Kamito, uh—"

Claire explained about Kamito's amnesia due to losing the darkness spirit as well as Est being sealed underground at the Academy at the same time.

Hearing this, Iseria—

"So this caused him to endure something harsh..."

The wolf's face distorted in suffering and murmured:

"The sacred sword being sealed, in other words, the Burial Chamber has manifested in the human realm."

"Burial chamber?"

Hearing the unfamiliar term, Claire and Rinslet cocked their heads in puzzlement.

"The Demon King's Burial Chamber—A special dimension conferred to those eligible Demon King candidates. In it are the seventy-two spirits under the Demon King's command and all his possessions."

"...Why would that kind of thing be at the Academy?"

Rinslet asked.

"The Burial Chamber manifests itself at the Demon King's base of operations. In other words, that youth subconsciously regards the Areishia Spirit Academy, where you are present, as his place of shelter that he is supposed to protect."

"...So it's like that."

The corners of Claire's lips relaxed somewhat. But in the next instant, she reacted strongly.

"The headmistress said that an investigation team assembled from the Knights will be arranged soon!"

The seventy-two spirits serving the Demon King. If that were to be

discovered, the fact of Kamito being the Demon King's successor would be revealed to the world.

If that came to pass, even the headmistress would no longer be able to protect Kamito.

Things were still fine as a male elementalist.

But being the Demon King's successor was an entirely different matter.

"Don't worry. The only one capable of discovering the Burial Chamber is none other than the Demon King himself. Other humans definitely cannot open it nor find it. However—"

At this moment, the elemental lord seemed a bit lost.

"Retrieving the Demon Slayer once more would imply that the lid over his memories must be lifted—"

Saying that, the direwolf suddenly stared off into space.

It froze like that, as though time had stopped.

"...Iseria-sama?"

"...Otherworldly Darkness... Active again... I must go, back..."

"A-Are things okay?"

"I can still... do my best... to suppress..."

Fenrir's eyes gradually lost brightness.

Then—

"..."

Fenrir remained seated in front of the two girls.

"...Iseria-sama?"

"Woof!"

...Fenrir barked.

It looked like the elemental lord had stopped possessing it.

"...Iseria-sama was pushing herself in order to communicate."

Fenrir lay down on the floor, looking exhausted.

Rinslet snapped her fingers. The white wolf instantly returned to Astral Zero.

"...The Demon King's Burial Chamber. Something troublesome has arrived as well."

Claire sighed.

Kamito himself had lost his memory, yet the Demon King's destiny still clung relentlessly to him—

"Hey, you two over there—"

Suddenly, a voice was heard inside the empty classroom.

"...!?"

The two girl frantically looked back.

Outside the window, a person was standing, covered all over by a gray overcoat.

...Evidently not one of the Academy's students. Obviously someone suspicious.

Furthermore, this person's presence was hidden even to first-rate elementalists like these two here. Clearly no ordinary accomplishment.

(No way, our conversation with the Elemental Lord was overheard!?)

Claire released Flametongue and questioned acutely:

"You, who are you!?"

Hearing her, the person simply put down her hood.

Long black hair fell down and scattered. Beneath the overcoat were vestments of the highest rank.

"My companion went off somewhere on her own, so I'm totally lost."

"Eh?"

Claire had seen this bespectacled face before.

"Y-You are—!"

"Could you please take me to the headmistress' office, little lady of the Elstein family?"

Part 2

"—Over here, Kamito."

After handing the two injured girls to their companions, the other knights, Kamito and Ellis hurried swiftly to the headmistress' office.

The Sylphid Knights declared a state of emergency. Although the attacker's goal was unknown, Ellis decided that the headmistress' safety came first.

"Quickly. The intruder could very well be aiming for the headmistress' life
—"

"Isn't the Empire's Dusk Witch the strongest spirit knight?"

Seeing Ellis in a panic, Kamito raised a question. Indeed, the Artificer earlier was an accomplished expert, but it was hard to imagine the Dusk Witch could be killed by someone like that.

(In actual fact, even the Instructional School did not dare make a move on the Dusk Witch.)

Normally, elementalists would gradually lose the power of the spirit contracts as they aged. However, it was said that the Dusk Witch ignored that absolute rule and still possessed overwhelming power to this day.

However, Ellis displayed a pained expression—

"This is something that only a small number of people know, but currently, the headmistress has already lost the power of the spirit contract."

"...Huh?"

In front of the office, Ellis stopped.

"Headmistress, are you safe!?"

She opened the door, almost as though kicking it open, only to see—

"...Hmm, you're quite early."

Sitting before her desk, Greyworth spoke calmly.

"...Thank goodness. You are safe—"

Ellis had just breathed a sigh of relief when...

"...!?"

In the next instant, her dark-brown eyes opened wide.

"Wha—Y-You!?"

There was already a visitor at the headmistress' office.

A petite young beauty dressed in black leather combat attire.

Boyish short black hair. Eyes of amethyst, glinting like sharp knives.

In the leather holster around her exposed thigh was a black iron gun.

—Unmistakable. This was the attacker whom Kamito and Ellis had just fought.

"Damn it, get away from the headmistress!"

Making a warning, Ellis prepared to summon her spirit but—

"Hold on—"

The one who stopped her was Greyworth despite her apparent impending crisis.

"H-Headmistress, may I ask why? That person is—"

Ellis asked in puzzlement. However, Greyworth remained composed:

"...Well, calm down. By the way, what's with that shameless getup?"

Eyes half-narrowed, she stared at Ellis's greatly exposed skin.

"How lamentable. In the position of upholding the Academy's morals and discipline, to think you'd dress up in this manner. I understand your wish to seduce the lad, but please do pay more attention."

"...Th-This is... N-No, this is..."

Ellis instantly blushed to her ears and hid behind Kamito's back.

Kamito sighed and looked at the beauty in the combat outfit.

"...What's going on? Why is the intruder here?"

"Oh, you've already fought?"

Hearing that, Greyworth smiled wryly, quite amused.

"She is Virrey Branford. Ninth of the Numbers in the Imperial Knights."

"—"Numbers!?" "

Ellis exclaimed in shock. Kamito could not help but be taken aback as well.

There was probably no one on the continent who did not know this term.

The Ordesia Empire's renowned, elite knights, twelve in number.

The witch seated before them used to be ranked first among them.

"Ninth... Could it be the Umbra's—"

Ellis's throat was shaking.

"Umbra?"

"It's the Empire's intelligence agency."

Greyworth explained.

"The Numbers being spirit knights who roam the battlefields is already a thing of the past. Right now, their duties are a lot different. Dame Virrey Branford is a special operative knight belonging to the Umbra."

"...Special operative knight. Ellis, you didn't notice?"

"It could not be helped. I have never seen Dame Virrey's face either."

"After all, special operative knights seldom appear before others. Not knowing her is only expected."

Greyworth shrugged. However, Kamito still had a question.

(But as one of the Empire's Numbers—)

"Fifteen."

"Huh?"

"My age is fifteen. You're thinking that I'm too young, right?"

Saying that, the Umbra's special operative knight glared at Kamito with displeasure.

...In actual fact, that made her seem especially childish.

"You're already one of the Numbers at age fifteen?"

"The Numbers don't have age limits. I was only sixteen when I first joined their ranks."

Greyworth interjected.

"Like the Blade Dance this time, I am actually qualified to take part. However, I withdrew because group battles do not fit my personality."

Ellis changed the direction of her gaze and glared at Virrey with displeasure.

"Dame Virrey. As a member of the Numbers, why did you attack the Academy's knights?"

Hearing that, Virrey looked at Kamito.

"Think about it. Kazehaya Kamito's abilities."

"My abilities?"

"Yeah. The male elementalist who defeated that Strongest Blade Dancer Ren Ashbell—I was thinking how powerful he'd be, but ended up so disappointed. To think you can't even control your contracted spirit well."

"Kamito is far from his normal level right now. If he went all out—"

Displeased, Ellis intended to rebutt but Kamito stopped her.

"Then what is the Numbers' Umbra doing here?"

This question caused Virrey to shrug.

"I'm serving as the bodyguard for another member of the Numbers. It looks like she got herself lost somewhere in the Academy. Jeez, where did she go —?"

"I don't think it's quite appropriate for a bodyguard to leave the one you're protecting and go off to play."

"I never thought she'd be so directionally impaired."

"Well, it should be fine inside the Academy. As long as there's protection from the Knights on campus."

"The Knights are currently tracking down the *unidentified assailant* and are probably too tied up to do so."

Ellis spoke sarcastically.

"By the way, why would a member of the Numbers need a bodyguard?"

Kamito asked in surprise.

"Just as Dame Greyworth said just now, even among the Numbers, not all of them are knights skilled in martial arts. Especially considering her spirit, which is the type which cannot fight at all."

—Just at this moment, there came a knocking at the office's door.

Everyone turned towards the door.

"Headmistress, I've brought you a visitor."

Kamito instantly noticed.

(...This voice, it's Claire's?)

"Come in."

"Excuse me—Oh, Kamito." "Well I never, it's Kamito-san!"

Pushing the door and entering was Claire as expected. Rinslet was with her as well.

"W-What's with that getup—"

Kamito was the first to be surprised by the two girls' appearances.

Claire and Rinslet were dressed in cute maid outfits for some reason.

Proper maid uniforms in black and white. On their heads were decorations of cat ears and fox ears respectively... Frankly speaking, they looked very cute.

Kamito watched in mesmerization for a few seconds—

"Kamito-kun, it's been a while."

Presently, another figure appeared from behind Claire.

A glasses-wearing woman with a calming atmosphere. Aged roughly twenty or so, she was dressed in pure white vestments resembling a robe.

"...Dame Lurie."

Ellis spoke. However, Kamito did not recognize the name.

"Nice to meet you, although that's not actually accurate. The way you are currently, you probably don't remember."

"I'm sorry..."

Kamito apologized to her.

"You're late, Dame Lurie. Lost again?"

Virrey shrugged while speaking.

"Virrey, how are you treating the one you're supposed to be guarding?"

Pressing on her temple, Lurie walked over to stand by Virrey's side.

Claire swiftly leaned against Kamito and whispered in his ear.

"That's the eighth of the Numbers—Lurie Lizaldia."

"Numbers..."

"The Empire's top healer. She's called 'Lurie the Miraculous'."

This time, it was Rinslet who whispered to add an explanation.

"No need to be nervous, Kamito-kun. I was called here to treat you."

"Treat me?"

"Yes. I applied to the imperial capital for a healer with outstanding skills, so she came."

Greyworth spoke up.

"Since I was coming anyway, I might as well deal with Kamito-kun's matter while I'm here. I only came to visit the Great Festival of the Spirits."

"Hmph, just treat it as something like that. But the lad is mine, Dame Lurie."

"I know. Kamito-kun is quite loved by Greyworth-sama."

Lurie walked up to Kamito and gently put her hand on his forehead.

"...?"

Kamito was puzzled. Next, she closed her eyes and softly chanted spirit magic.

"—O light of healing. Illuminate this person's darkness."

Instantly, a bright light appeared on her fingertips. A light giving off a warm and gentle impression.

(...This light, what is it...)

Kamito felt his strength escaping from all over his body.

Amidst pleasant, light slumber, his consciousness kept sinking.

"Yes. Just let your strength drain and relax—"

Lurie's whispers were heard by his ear. Kamito did as told, closed his eyes and nodded silently.

"What do you see?"

"No, nothing at all..."

"...I see. Then what do you hear?"

"Nothing at—"

Just as he was about to reply in the negative...



—Kamito, hey, Kamito.

(...?)

A voice in his mind suddenly called out for his name.

(...This... voice is...?)

Not Lurie's. It was a voice that Kamito did not recognize.

(...No wait. I recognize this voice.)

It felt very soothing. A very very nostalgic voice.

—Kamito, I offer everything to you.

—My heart, my power, my destiny.

Fragmentary images surfaced in his mind.

Beautiful black wings. Gorgeous black hair fluttering in the wind.

Dating back to his childhood, the touch of slender fingers that always caressed his head gently.

(You... who exactly are you...?)

—Therefore, I hope. You can... me.

The lips of the girl, whose face he could not see, touched him gently.

Instantly, the light shattered.

"...!?" "Kyah!"

Kamito and Lurie were blown away, each crashing into opposite walls in the office.

"Kamito, are you okay?" "Kamito-san!" "Kamito!"

Claire and the girls hurried over.

"Dame Lurie, are you hurt?"

Virrey helped Lurie up and swiftly pointed her gun at Kamito.

"What did you do to Dame Lurie?"

"N-Nothing at... guh..."

While holding his painfully throbbing head, Kamito groaned.

"Virrey, that was not Kamito-kun's fault just now."

Lurie slowly shook her head.

"Looks like Kamito-kun's heart has been locked up."

"Locked...?"

"Yes. This is not memory loss simply due to a psychological blow. If that were the case, the hole in his memory would be far too clean."

...This a clue. The hole in his memory was too clean, Kamito felt that personally.

Rather than recalling nothing about himself, it seemed as though memories related to something specific were dug out—

"This is sealing magic cast on Kamito-kun by someone. High-level darkness magic that completely seals away all memories related to the one who cast the spell."

"...Hmm, similar to hypnotic suggestion?"

Greyworth pushed her glasses while asking.

"Yes. In that case, it looks like it will take some time."

"That magic can be lifted given enough time?"

"It's worth a try. However, this magic is rooted deep in Kamito-kun's psyche. Forcibly making a move on it could very well end up destroying Kamito-kun's mind—"

"No way!"

Claire screamed mournfully. Lurie shrugged.

"Oh well, just do our best. After all, this is for the sake of Kamito-kun who has brought honor to Ordesia for the second time."

"Yeah, thanks—"

Next, Greyworth turned her gaze to Ellis.

"Ellis, take Dame Lurie and Dame Virrey to the guest quarters."

"—A-Affirmative."

Hearing that, Ellis placed her hand on her chest and nodded.

"By the way, Headmistress—"

Finally recovered from the headache, Kamito asked.

"What?"

"Uh, about my contracted spirit, has authorization still not been issued for searching the underground facility?"

"...Yeah, about that matter."

Greyworth pressed her finger against her temple.

"No matter what, it is an abandoned military installation after all. The formalities are quite time consuming—Besides, even if authorization is issued for investigation, in order to prevent the risk of a rampage, you cannot contact your contracted spirit in your current state."

"But won't that spirit help me recover my memory?"

"...It's true that the possibility exists."

Greyworth nodded candidly.

"But the risk is too high."

"...!"

Kamito clenched his right fist tightly.

"Kamito, uh, the headmistress is being considerate for you—"

"...Yeah, I know."

"—Then this concludes the conversation. Kamito's matter will be handed over to Dame Lurie. The Demon Slayer's retrieval will wait until progress is made on analyzing your memories."

Greyworth ended the subject, issued orders and dismissed everyone.

Chapter 7 - Great Festival's Eve

Part 1

Walking out of the office, Kamito parted ways with Ellis in the corridor.

"Well then, please come over here, Dame Lurie."

"See you later, Kamito-kun."

Lurie smiled faintly while Virrey silently turned on her heels.

"...Okay. I'll be returning to my room too."

Just as Kamito muttered...

"Hold on, Kamito."

Claire grabbed his wrist from behind.

"W-What's up?"

"Why is Ellis wearing such a terrible set of armor?"

"I can't believe you forced the captain to wear that kind of thing... S-Shameless!"

...These girls looked like they had a huge misunderstanding.

"...Umm, that's apparently the uniform the Knights are wearing for the Great Festival of the Spirits."

"U-Uniform!?"

Claire's eyes were opened so wide that they were round.

"...N-No way, wearing such radical clothing out on the streets?"

"It's almost like underwear."

"...Yeah, I found it strange too."

Kamito scratched his head in embarrassment.

"Ellis..."

"The captain, how pitiful."

After learning of the story, the two girls showed pity in their eyes.

"By the way, what's with the getup, you two?"

Kamito was also raising questions about the two girls' maid uniforms.

"Th-This is what we're wearing for the imitation shop!"

"I will be serving customers."

"I see..."

Speaking of which, they had mentioned this morning about Raven Class running a maid cafe imitation shop.

That was apparently where these clothes came from.

"Kamito, you have no more duties today for the Knights, right?"

Suddenly, Claire put her hand at her waist and asked.

"Yeah, I guess."

"Then head over there to help."

"...Got it."

Kamito shrugged and agreed.

Passing through the courtyard to reach the secondary block, they then climbed up ancient wooden steps.

The venue assigned to Raven Class was an empty classroom on the second floor.

A sign hung over the classroom's number plate.

Luna Forest—That was apparently the shop's name.

Opening the door, Kamito found himself in a carefully decorated shop space.

"This is quite proper."

"I know right."

Claire nodded with satisfaction. The tables and chairs were carved from wood. The pleasant grass-green wallpaper was apparently specially switched.

Kamito surveyed the classroom, deeply impressed.

"Claire, where did you go off to—Oh my, it's Kamito-kun?"

Suddenly, Kamito heard a voice he seemed to have heard before.

Turning around, he found a black-haired beauty dressed as a bunny-eared maid.

This was Her Highness the princess who had given him the killer cookie in the corridor yesterday.

"Ugh—"

Recalling the surreal taste of the cookie, Kamito could not help but groan.

"Ugh... What's that supposed to mean, Kamito-kun?"

"Oh, nothing..."

The princess pouted with displeasure. Seeing that, Kamito frantically waved his hands to cover up.

"Fianna, is the magic circle's construction going well?"

"It's basically complete. Now I'm just taking a break and checking out the situation on this side."

Saying that, Fianna turned her gaze back to Kamito—

"Kamito-kun, do you have shifts too?"

"No, I belong to the Sylphid Knights—"

Kamito shook his head, but...

"The festival only comes around once a year, Kamito, you should join in. You should have free time on the second day, right?"

Claire suggested.

"...However, there's nothing for boys to wear here, right?"

"Well, that's true too. Let's borrow a butler uniform from somewhere."

"On the other hand, I believe that it's fine without a butler uniform, yes?"

"Eh?"

Fianna smiled impishly at Kamito.

"Uh, what's that..."

"Hmph, exactly what I mean, literally—"

Fianna snapped her fingers. Immediately, a crowd of girls from Raven Class appeared from inside the part of the room sectioned off by a curtain, surrounding Kamito.

"...!"

"Very well, dress Kamito-kun up as a beautiful maid!"

"H-Hold on..."

"How interesting!" "P-Perhaps it will be surprisingly suited to him..." "Leave the make up to me!"

The girls of this class seemed a bit strange, showing great interest in Kamito.

"You two, s-s-save me—"

Kamito turned his gaze at Claire and Rinslet but...

"...Uh, don't worry. I think you'll look very good in it."

"Me too, uh... I actually want to see."

The two girls avoided eye contact at the same time.

"Okay, okay!" "Just count the stains on the wall and it'll be over." "Hurry hurry~"

"U-Uwahhhh!"

The screams of Kamito resounded in the entire classroom after he was taken into the room.

...Several minutes later, changed into a maid's outfit, Kamito reappeared from behind the curtain.

A wig was placed on his head, combed neat and tidily. He even had light make up like a princess maiden.

On his head were cat ears ornaments just like Claire's.

(...H-How strange. Inexplicably, there's no sense of dissonance.)

Standing before the mirror, Kamito had this conclusion.

It was as though he was already used to this—

"...K-Kamito, so pretty!"

"...I-It suits you quite well!"

Claire and Rinslet could not help but exclaim.

"Kamito-kun, you can join the Beauties' Festival next time!"

Fianna clenched her fist while the girls in the class all nodded repeatedly.

"Y-You girls..."

Kamito groaned in his throat—

"...Kazehaya Kamito, I never knew you had this kind of fetish."

At this moment, there was a surprised sounding voice.

"...!?"

Changed into her Knights of Ordesia uniform, she was Virrey Branford.

Her eyes of amethyst glared sharply at Kamito.

"N-No, you're wrong! Don't get the wrong idea!"

Kamito shouted frantically but Virrey did not change her cold expression.

"This pervert."

"Who is that person?" "She's not a student here. She must be one of the Empire's spirit knights."

The girls in the classroom began to chatter.

The majority of elementalists looked up to the spirit knights.

But it looked like no one realized she was one of the Numbers.

Virrey sat down at a nearby table.

"I can order tea and cake, right?"

"Y-Yes. Pleased to be of service."

One girl happily nodded but—

"No—Kamito, you prepare the tea."

...He was named.

"I'm not a noble, so I'm a total amateur at brewing tea."

Kamito grumbled with his eyes half closed.

"Doesn't matter. I'm not particular either."

"...Sigh. Got it."

Sighing, Kamito boiled water in the kitchen and started to brew tea.

Although the tea leaves were arbitrarily picked from the dozens of jars, all of them were probably high class stuff no matter which he picked. The rather classy fragrance went straight into his nose. While the tea was steaming, Kamito took the best-looking roll cake nearby, cut a neat slice and placed it

on a plate.

Clearly with no memory of it, for some reason, he knew how to brew tea.

This was a skill unneeded at the Instructional School... Who on earth taught him?

(...Did I actually work as a maid before?)

Kamito was getting more and more confounded by what kind of person Kazehaya Kamito was before losing his memory.

Virrey Branford sipped a mouthful of tea, then...

"...You pass. Perhaps you are quite suited as a maid."

"You are too kind."

Kamito shrugged and sat down opposite to Virrey. Getting unrelated girls caught up just for testing Kamito's abilities, this fact made Kamito feel that he could not get along with this member of the Numbers.

"What about you, why do you talk like a man?"

Hearing him, she quietly put down the cup of tea.

"Special operative knights' chief duties consist of espionage activities in other countries. Cross-dressing offers many conveniences. Since male elementalists do not exist in principle, it eliminates the worry of being exposed as an elementalist."

"...I see. You've already experienced many hellish battlefields by this age."

"This has nothing to do with age. The same goes for you, right?"

She glared sharply at Kamito, then cut a piece of the roll cake and brought it to her mouth.

In the next instant, Virrey's face suddenly went livid.

"...C-Cough... W-What is this... Is it poisoned!?"

She lay on the table, her arms convulsing nonstop.

"...How could it be poisoned—Ah!"

Kamito suddenly realized.

Claire and Rinslet were silently pointing at Fianna.

It looked like the piece of roll cake came from the hand of Her Highness the imperial princess.

...Because it looked the best, I took it out without thinking.

"...S-Sorry..."

"Urghhh... You bastard, it is poisoned after all... Underhanded... villain..."

Holding her belly, Virrey stood up unsteadily.

"...I, shall, excuse myself."

"H-Hey, are you okay?"

Just as Kamito went up to help her...

"Kazehaya Kamito. My true mission is to observe and see what kind of person you are."

She whispered in his ear.

"...Huh?"

"Hypothetically, if you were the Demon King leading the world towards destruction—"

—I will mercilessly kill you when the time comes.

Part 2

—In this manner, they busied themselves with the Raven Class's interior decorations until night had fallen.

Kamito and Ellis went to the Spirit Forest together.

"Sorry Ellis for needing you to help lead the way."

"Pay it no heed. This is part of the discipline committee's duties."

She was leading him to the ritual purification site used by princess maidens. The spring water here apparently had fatigue recovering effects and was useful even for the Empire's knights. Of course, this was originally a place where males were forbidden. After Ellis had a discussion with Greyworth, Kamito was authorized to use it during late night.

Having reached the spring, Ellis handed a fire spirit crystal to Kamito.

The mineral had a salamander-shaped fire spirit sealed inside.

"Just activate this mineral then put it in the water. The water is a bit cold at night."

"Oh okay, thanks."

"W-Were it not for the rules, I would enter together with you..."

"Hmm?"

"N-Nothing! D-Do not be late for the morning meeting tomorrow!"

Ellis shook her head to cover up then flew across the sky to the other end.

"...She seems quite busy."

Kamito took off his uniform and soaked himself in the spring with only a pair of shorts.

...So cold. Taking Ellis's suggestion, Kamito injected divine power into the fire spirit crystal.

Glowing red, the spirit crystal released heat in the water.

"Wow, this really is convenient—"

The water temperature rose slowly, then steam resulted. It was almost the same as a hot spring.

Kamito looked up at the night sky and exhaled, sighing.

"...So much happened today."

Why was Kamito's contracted spirit sealed away?

Did it have some connection to why his memory was lost?

Then there was what Virrey Branford had said.

(...I am the Demon King leading the world towards destruction?)

Why did she say something like that—?

...Splash. Suddenly, he heard sounds of water from behind.

"...?"

Looking back, he found a figure standing at a bush.

"—Who is it?"

Releasing killing intent, Kamito asked.

...Ordinary students were not supposed to go out during such hours.

"Wait, Kamito-kun, it's me."

"...This voice. You're Lurie Lizaldia?"

The figure nodded.

"...S-Sorry. I'll come out right away!"

Kamito frantically tried to stand up.

Speaking of which, she was wearing glasses. Perhaps in the darkness of the night, she failed to notice that Kamito had entered this place. After all, it was a ritual purification site supposed to be used exclusively by princess maidens.

"Oh, it's fine if you stay there. I came to see you, Kamito-kun."

"...See me?"

"Yes, didn't I mention last time? You need regular treatment."

As soon as she spoke, on the other side of the rising steam, Lurie's vestments fell to the ground all at once.

"...!?"

Before Kamito could make a sound, she had already entered the spring.

Wet, sleek, black hair. Delicate and smooth skin. Kamito had not noticed when she was dressed in her vestments, but her figure was actually quite good.

Her seductive bosom, quite impressive in volume, was swaying before Kamito's eyes.

"...I-If it's treatment, surely in a room—"

"Isn't it easier to relax here? Besides, it also helps strengthen my powers."

Yeah right, relaxing in such conditions—

Kamito intended to retort but his convulsing throat could not make a sound.

"W-Why naked?"

"Oh dear, you haven't heard from Greyworth-sama? Yours is an unusual constitution where magical effects are difficult to transmit to you without direct skin contact. Fianna-sama does this usually as well, I expect—"

"...T-To think I've done that kind of thing before!?"

Kamito was shocked by his own experiences.

(...I-I can't believe I did that with a proper princess!)

Lurie pressed her chest against Kamito's arm.

"Okay, relax."

Finally giving up, Kamito sat down obediently. Then sacred light appeared from Lurie's hand and faintly illuminated the surroundings. Then like that, she placed her hand over Kamito's heart.

"...Your heart is pounding."

"Th-That goes without saying!"

Face red, Kamito looked away to the other side.

Lurie chuckled and whispered in his ear.

"...Close your eyes and take a deep breath."

Feeling his body filled with warm light, Kamito nodded.

"—So, first question. Girls with large busts or small busts, which do you prefer?"

"...Does this have anything to do with my memory?"

"No, I'm just curious."

"...I'm begging you. Please be more serious."

Kamito closed his eyes and groaned.

"...Well then, I'll ask seriously. After obtaining victory at the Blade Dance, you lost your memory at the Elemental Lords' sanctuary. Do you still remember anything about what happened there?"

"The sanctuary of the Elemental Lords... No, I remember nothing at all..."

...Throb. Kamito felt a slight headache.

"Different question. What is your contracted spirit like?"

"My... contracted spirit... is..."

...Throb. Throb.

Beneath his eyelids, something flashing with silver-white luster inexplicably appeared.

"Silver-white hair... A very pretty girl... It feels something like that..."

"Looks like that's the Demon Slayer. What about your left hand's spirit?"

"...Left hand?"

...Throb. Throb. Throb. Throb.

"Ugh... Guh... Ahh..."

Spirit. Left hand's—Black wings, her heart—I, using this sword—

"—Kamito-kun, you, *what did you see in the elemental lords' sanctuary?*"

"...Ahhhhhhhhh!"

Kamito howled from the depths of his throat.

Lurie's body was sent flying.

"Huff, huff, huff, huff, huff..."

Kamito collapsed again, on the water surface.

"Sorry. This, what a mess."

"...Let's call it a day here."

Lurie shook her head and stood up.

...Imperceptibly, the spring water had gone cold already.

Part 3

Returning to the room, Kamito found Claire still awake in bed.

Under the light provided by a spirit crystal's flame, she was reading a book zealously.

"Claire, what are you reading?"

"Waaah!"

Dressed in pajamas, Claire closed the book in a panic upon hearing his voice.

"...Th-This is preparation for tomorrow. A reference book about playing a maid's role."

"I see. As expected of the honors student."

Although the book's title, "Tale of the Maid of the Night" entered his view, Kamito did not take any particular note of it.

Because he could not tear his eyes away from Claire's appearance.

Normally, tied up on the sides of her head, her crimson hair was now let down.

Probably having just taken a bath, her hair was still a little moist.

"...What's the matter?"

Claire asked in puzzlement.

"No, it's just the sight of your hair untied..."

"Oh okay. Like this, it's easy to mix me up with Nee-sama."

Using her fingers as a comb, Claire straightened her hair.

"Kamito, do you like this hairstyle?"

"...Well, I think the twintails suit you very well too."

Kamito turned his face away to hide his embarrassment.

"I-I see..."

Hearing that, Claire whispered quite happily.

"Kamito, do you have any plans for tomorrow?"

"The morning is with Ellis patrolling the Academy town."

"...Hmm. F-Fine. After the patrol duty is over, come with me to take a tour."

"I don't need to help out the class?"

"You still want to dress up as a maid?"

"No..."

Kamito shook his head.

At this moment, Claire extended her little finger—

"Agreed? Tour the Great Festival of the Spirits with me tomorrow. It's a promise."

"...?"

"Th-There—"

She hooked hers and Kamito's little finger together.

Suddenly, her gaze fell upon the spirit seal on his right hand.

"Hey, Kamito—"

"Hmm?"

"Kamito, do you really wish to recover your memory?"

Faced with Claire, gazing sincerely—

"...I'm not sure."

Kamito answered thus.

Part 4

"—Fufu, beloved children. I can feel you stirring in excitement."

Under the moonlight, golden hair was fluttering in the wind of the night.

Within the flourishing forest stretching outside the palace, a girl in vestments smiled tenderly.

Millennia Sanctus—the cardinal from the Holy Kingdom of Lugia.

In her hand, she was holding a necklace, a rusted sword, a silver bracelet and four rings.

These were all ornaments from royalty of antiquity. These Artifacts each sealed within them a tuned militarized spirit.

Inside were spirits for assaulting strongholds, originally requiring a high level of skill to use. Also present were forsaken spirits that were impossible to control and deemed unsuitable for military use.

The girl's finger slid across a knife's blade.

Immediately, darkness flowed out from her finger tip and through the blade, corrupting all of the artifacts.

"—O True Darkness. Spill out and corrupt the insane, beloved children."

Flowing out endlessly, the darkness dripped to the girl's feet, forming a pool of blood.

Watching the scene with one eye, the girl—

"Fu, fufu, fu—"

She could not help but smile.

Part 5

With a campfire lighting up the darkness, a figure appeared next to the stone circle.

There were no other active presences in the surroundings. The twelve princess maidens constructing the Gate for inviting the spirits to the Academy as well as the supervising knights were all collapsed on the ground, unconscious.

Fianna Ray Ordesia was not among them. At this moment, she was sleeping at the secondary block. The fact of her absence had been confirmed beforehand.

Had an outstanding princess maiden like her been present, things would have been a bit troublesome.

The figure touched the giant magic circle that was traced on the ground.

Although the rejection reaction of protective magic caused sparks, that merely lasted but an instant. Soon, the defenses were broken through and the activation spell, composed of spirit language, was gradually rewritten—

By dawn, these girls would have forgotten everything.

As though nothing had happened at all.

Chapter 8 - Great Festival of the Spirits

Part 1

—Kamito... Where are you, Kamito?

(...?)

A voice came from the darkness.

A girl's voice, sounding as though it might disappear any moment.

(...Who, are you?)

Amidst darkness so dark that he could not even see underfoot, Kamito gingerly reached out.

This was like wandering in a wilderness of memories.

This was a dream. Simply his subconscious unease manifesting in the form of a dream.

While walking towards the voice, Kamito calmly reached his conclusion.

(But—)

Kamito continued to think. Retaining the ability for lucid thought even in dreams was part of the most basic training taught by the Instructional School.

Rather than a dream, it was more like his mind moving through his subconscious—

(...There might be clues to my memories.)

Reaching on in the darkness at this time, he suddenly felt a sharp pain.

The spirit seal branded on his right hand gave off light.

—Kamito... Do you hear... my voice?

The seal's glow slightly illuminated the surrounding darkness.

In his view, straight ahead—A girl could be seen chained up.

"...!?"

Unimaginably beautiful, a girl with silver-white hair.

Her pale, white, nude body appeared in the darkness.

(...That's my contracted spirit?)

Terminus Est—Literally the strongest sword spirit, crowned with the title of the Demon Slayer.

But in contrast to her title, she looked so fragile and delicate in appearance.

She looked like she would shatter like glass with a single touch of the finger.

With some hesitation, Kamito stopped walking.

The darkness in the surroundings began to move and gradually swallowed the girl's nude body.

"...Est...!"

In that instant, Kamito cried out the girl's name, forgetting it was a dream.

He called out the name of the contracted spirit that had been erased from his memory.

However, when he stepped forward, his feet sank into dark mud.

Like that, he gradually sank.

"...Wait... up...!"

Reaching out furiously, his finger touched the girl's hand slightly.

Suddenly, her thoughts seemed to be transmitted to him, using their point of contact as a bridge.

—Kamito, I am waiting here.

—Waiting for you, Kamito, to return after fulfilling *her* promise.

Part 2

"...Seriously, you dreamt of Est?"

"Yeah. No mistake about it... I think."

When dawn came, on the day of the Great Festival of the Spirits—

While walking on the path to the secondary block, Kamito told Claire the dream he had this morning.

When he woke up, he found no change in his condition.

His memories remained lost.

But the pain he felt in his right hand seemed like a lingering part of the dream.

(...Perhaps it's the result of Lurie's treatment last night.)

Kamito pondered.

"Connecting to the contracted spirit through dreams is quite common. I often share Scarlet's dreams. Like dreams about pigging out on canned tuna."

"M-Meow—"

While walking by her side, Scarlet made sounds of protest.

"...You sure it's not a dream from your side?"

"O-Of course not..."

Claire pouted with displeasure, her face going mildly red.

But soon, she recovered a serious expression—

"...However, it seems that Est is calling for you, Kamito."

"But why doesn't she return to me?"

Kamito cast his gaze at the seal on his right hand.

"Probably due to the memory loss, your connection to the spirit is

interrupted."

"...I see."

"So, what kind of dream was it?"

"Oh... Umm, a girl, completely nude, chained up in the darkness—"

"H-Hold on a sec!"

Claire suddenly stopped walking.

"Th-That dream, no way... It's an e-erotic dream... Right?"

"Completely wrong!"

"Don't be shy. K-Kamito, you're a boy of that age after all. E-Even me, I sometimes dream of being chained up—Oh no, w-what have you made me say!?"

Claire's face instantly went red and she started beating on his shoulder nonstop.

"Like I said, it wasn't like that..."

"Oh, Kamito-kun—"

Kamito heard someone calling his name from afar.

Running over was the black-haired girl in the Divine Ritual Institute's uniform, Fianna.

She was originally on a hill with a massive ring of rock, surrounded by gathered princess maidens, preparing for the gate opening ritual mentioned previously.

"Kamito-kun, would you like to visit the imitation shop at the secondary block?"

"Yeah. I guess I should show up at least."

Hearing Fianna's question, Kamito answered and shrugged.

After walking Claire there, he intended to hurry over to the Knights immediately.

"Fianna, is the gate opening ritual ready?"

"Of course, Now we're just preparing the fireworks for pleasing the spirits."

"Not bad..."

Claire exclaimed honestly.

The princess was apparently one of the candidates to the continent's five Queens, with outstanding abilities in ritual magic that far surpassed upperclassman students.

Hence, even as an underclassman, she was still appointed as the one in charge of the most important ritual.

"However, I can't say it was a walk in the park. Although the stone circle's power is being borrowed, opening a Gate that allows ruler-class spirits to pass through..."

On the princess's wryly smiling face, there were heavy signs of fatigue.

She had worked continuously for this day, presumably accumulating a lot of fatigue.

"However, we're already at the final stage. It must succeed!"

As though cheering for herself, Fianna raised her arm.

Beneath her uniform, her bosom quivered as a result.

"So, Kamito-kun, you must enjoy the festival today as well!"

"Yeah."

With a flutter of her skirt, Fianna jogged back over to the hill.

"Doesn't feel like a princess somehow."

Kamito smiled wryly.

"Perhaps she stopped putting on airs a little due to being tired. She must have built up a lot of stress over these past few days. Well, a royal's position is quite troublesome too."

Hearing Kamito, Claire murmured, a little worried.

Part 3

In front of the secondary block, a large number of students were mixed together already.

The aroma of baked goods was coming from the imitation shop. Spirits of various forms were gathered in the surroundings. These not only included the students' contracted spirits but also visiting spirits from the nearby Spirit Forest... Kamito had never seen this many spirits before.

"...Wow, this bread stick smells so good, it looks quite tasty."

"Our classroom is over there."

Grabbing Claire who was wandering leisurely, Kamito frantically pulled her back.

"...~!"

Instantly, Claire's face went red.

Her wandering legs froze.

"...What's the matter?"

"Ah, uh... Umm, hand, suddenly being held..."

Her voice was almost inaudible.

At this moment, whispers started in the surroundings.

"G-Grabbing a girl's hand." "So naturally!" "Feels like he's very used to it!"

"...Oh."

Only then did Kamito react.

This was a school where rich girls attended. Holding hands with a boy was completely inconceivable.

Claire getting surprised was unavoidable.

"...S-Sorry for startling you."

Kamito frantically released her hand.

"...I-It's nothing, don't worry."

Claire's twintails swirled as she shook her head.

...Amidst this inexplicably embarrassing atmosphere, the two of them walked silently.

Walking in front, the hell cat spirit skipped up the stairs.

Students from various classes were gathered in the secondary block. It was very crowded.

Instead of wearing their uniforms, some of the girls were dressed in ritual dresses or inexplicable mascot costumes.

Walking upstairs, Kamito and Claire finally arrived at the cafe of Raven Class.

The door was beautifully decorated, looking almost like a real cafe.

Of course, given the wealth and influence wielded by these students of the Academy as daughters of noble houses, cooperating to set up a beyond first-rate cafe was nothing impossible. However, they had been instructed to open imitation shops using their own efforts in the Great Festival of the Spirits.

Pushing the door open—

"Oh, Kamito."

A girl dressed as a maid turned her head back to look at him.

"Welcome to the Luna Forest cafe!"

Rinslet Laurenfrost curtsied and greeted elegantly.

Shining platinum-blonde hair. Clear eyes of emerald. A noblewoman through and through, nevertheless, she seemed inexplicably authentic in a maid outfit.

"...As always, a maid outfit suits you very well."

"Yeah, I agree."

Kamito concurred.

"H-How rude, do know that I come from a noble family, that of a margrave's!"

...Even with a face filled with fury, while she was dressed up as a fox-eared maid, she did not seem intimidating at all.

On the table next to her, the one who was supposed to be the real maid, Carol, was gracefully having breakfast.

"Hmm~, milady's tea and roll cake are simply exquisite~♪"

"Ah, how unfair. I want to eat roll cake too."

"Claire, come here and prepare."

"W-Wait, what are you doing!"

Resisting, Claire was shoved by Rinslet over to the other side of the curtain.

"You've arrived, Claire."

"Very well, prepare yourself."

"...Huah... W-Wait a sec, what are you doing, kyah—"

Claire's suffering screams could be heard from behind the curtain.

"What a troublesome child."

Rinslet clapped her hands.

Suddenly, she turned towards Kamito.

"Speaking of which, have you had breakfast yet, Kamito-san?"

"...I need to head over to the Knights next. Sorry."

Kamito had no choice but to refuse the much wanted invitation.

Eating breakfast here would mean being late for the Sylphid Knights' morning meeting.

"...I-I see."

Rinslet seemed a bit disappointed, her shoulders slumping.

"Sorry. How about next time?"

"It's a promise."

Hearing that, her mood soon recovered and she smiled.

At this moment, the classroom's door opened—

"Hi, Onee-sama... Onii-sama too!"

Dressed in a blue one-piece dress, an eight or nine-year-old girl was speaking.

She had blonde hair like Rinslet and was a very cute girl at that.

No matter how you looked, she did not seem to be a student at the Academy.

Kamito was thinking she was lost in the Academy—

(Just now, she called me her older brother...)

In the classroom, Kamito was the only male present.

The girl's eyes of emerald were gazing straight at Kamito:

"Onii-sama♪"

"...Uh, you're talking about me?"[1]

Unable to hide his bafflement, Kamito pointed at himself.

Accidentally, he switched back to using his old manner of self-referral.

Suddenly, the girl skipped over and hugged him.

"...!?"

"Onii-sama, what's the matter?"

The girl cocked her head in puzzlement.

"Uh, 'Onii-sama'... means me?"

Kamito had some idea of a girl who called him her older brother. However, this girl here was not the Instructional School's Muir Alenstarl.

"Mireille, stop giving Kamito-san a hard time."

Rinslet grabbed the girl by the ear.

"...~Onee-sama, what are you doing?"

"Onee-sama?"

"This child is Mireille Laurenfrost. My younger sister."

Rinslet held her temple as she introduced.

"...Sister?"

Kamito looked at the young girl again.

...They did look quite similar.

She was probably going to grow up into a beauty like her sister.

"But why do you call me Onii-sama?"

Mireille Laurenfrost proudly puffed out her tiny chest.

"Onee-sama is Onii-sama's future wife. So that makes me Onii-sama's younger sister."

"...W-Wife!?"

"W-W-W-What are you talking about!?"

Thud thud thud.

Blushing to her ears, Rinslet hammered her fists against Mireille's back.

On the other hand, Kamito shuddered at the latest revelations.

The Fahrengart daughter was his fiancée. He had experienced intimate skin contact with the imperial princess. Now, the Margrave Laurenfrost's daughter was his future wife—

(...Kazehaya Kamito, who the heck are you!?)

Kamito was having an increasingly tough time understanding who he was before he had lost his memory.

...No wonder he was called the king of lust.

At this moment—

"Mireille, do not cause trouble for milady and Kamito."

A calm voice came from somewhere.

"...?"

Without any warning, a maid grabbed the young girl by the back of her collar.

She was probably thirteen or fourteen in age.

Dressed in another school's uniform, she had dark-brown hair.

Most striking of her appearance was the sight of her eyes.

Heterochromia.

(...Demon Sealing Eye?)

Kamito soon noticed the true nature of her eyes.

Among the special ability users at the Instructional School, there were several who possessed the same type of eye. However, none of these girls were able to suppress the spirits sealed inside and every one of them died.

"Milla, l-let go!"

Caught by the collar, Mireille struggled.

However, the girl named Milla remained unmoved.

Continuing to hold Mireille's back collar, she turned towards Kamito.

"Sorry for milady making trouble."

She bowed her head very politely.

"Uh, you are—"

...This child, was she also one of Kazehaya Kamito's acquaintances?

Carrying this question, Kamito cast his gaze towards Rinslet—

"She is Milla Bassett, Mireille's maid."

Rinslet introduced.

"...The memory loss appears to be real."

Milla remained expressionless but her eyes lowered as though in melancholy.

"...Sorry for not remembering you, uh, and Mireille—"

"Memory loss?"

Mireille tilted her head in puzzlement.

"Kamito currently has amnesia due to his injuries from the Blade Dance.

Don't cause more trouble for him."

"I see now... Sorry, Onii-sama."

After listening to Milla, Mireille reflected on her behavior.

...Although it was a bit surprising, this child was fundamentally very honest and upfront.

"By the way, Milla, what's with this way you're dressed up?"

Rinslet asked at this moment.

Kamito felt equally curious.

She was wearing what appeared to be a military uniform with red embroidery against a white background.

It did not seem like a maid uniform at all.

"Yes, because today is the Great Festival of the Spirits, I put on my homeland's military uniform."

"Homeland?"

Hearing Kamito's question...

"The military uniform of the Principality of Rossvale."

Milla replied expressionlessly.

The Principality of Rossvale was a small country that had seceded from the Holy Kingdom of Lugia in recent years.

"Milla came from the Principality of Rossvale."

"Yes. This set of clothing was what I wore in my encounter with you, Kamito, so it has commemorative value, hence—"

Halfway through, Milla stopped speaking.

Her heterochromatic eyes stared straight at Kamito.

"Milla spent a lot of time thinking over what to wear for today, you know?"

"Mireille, that's—"

Milla's face blushed slightly.

"Also, the closet was basically filled with erotic clothing no different from underwear... Mugugu..."

Milla silently covered Mireille's mouth.

Then she glared towards Kamito—

"Kamito, Mireille is lying. There is no erotic clothing in the closet."

"G-Got it. I believe you."

Fearing Milla's mysteriously intimidating aura, Kamito nodded repeatedly.

At this moment, the curtain was forcefully opened from the changing area—

"Claire has finished changing!"

"Huaaaah, jeez, this is totally unruly!"

Turned into a cat-eared maid, Claire made her appearance.

"Claire, that looks very good on you."

"You're almost the same as a cat fairy!"

Rinslet and Carol's comments were heard.

"H-Hmph, shut up!"

Claire shyly turned her face away.

Then she glanced at Kamito.

"..."

"...W-What about you?"

"Uh, I find it quite cute."

Kamito offered his honest opinion—

"...~!"

Hearing that, Claire blushed to her ears and hid behind the curtain again.

Part 4

"...Oh no, I'm going to be late."

Looking at the large clock in the lecture hall—

Kamito hurried over to the church that served as the Knights' headquarters.

The Academy's grounds were very vast. Furthermore, the church's location

was on the opposite side relative to the secondary block.

Originally, there were many leylines running through the school ground. He could get there quickly using divine power to power up his legs, but given the current crowded conditions, he had no choice but to walk normally.

"Oh, hurry and look, hurry and look, it's Kamito the king of lust!" "I heard that his wish for a harem was rejected by the Elemental Lords."

"Deplorable!" "King of lust! King of lust!" "N-No, don't point at him—"

...He could hear all sorts of gossip.

Evidently, the notorious name of Kazehaya Kamito was widespread among the public.

(I-I can't believe that even such young children would...)

Hearing the little girl mumbling "king of lust" unintelligibly, Kamito was greatly shocked.

...I might as well give up and stay in amnesia, for the sake of world peace.

While evading the gathering spectating crowd, Kamito hastened his pace.

Weaving through the crowd, he finally reached the church at the outskirts of the Academy's territory.

At the church plaza, Ellis was currently giving orders to the members.

Seeing Ellis standing on a wooden crate, Kamito stopped.

(...Different from yesterday's armor?)

Beautiful, black, lustrous pauldrons. The jet-black background was reminiscent of night's darkness. Combined with white lace, it gave a very mature impression.

Faced with Ellis's getup, Kamito could not help but stare in amazement—

"—Kamito, you are late."

Ellis called out from atop the wooden crate.

"Sorry, there were more people than expected."

"...Seriously. There are even more people over at the Academy town."

Ellis shrugged then turned her gaze back to the members of the Knights.

"—Well then, final confirmation. Team Sierra and Team Diane will take the school building. Team Reishia and Team Rakka will be stationed respectively on the Academy's grounds. Team Falnesia will take the Spirit Forest. Team Froza, with the most members, will be in charge of the Academy town together with Kamito and me. Any questions?"

"—All clear!"

The knights all answered in unison then dispersed to head towards their area in charge.

Even as a student organization, they were very well-trained.

"...I still haven't gotten used to this completely."

Getting down from the wooden crate, Ellis sighed.

"My elder sister would have encouraged everyone even more."

"Really? In my view, it went quite well."

"Hmph, spare me the flattery..."

Cough cough, Ellis coughed lightly.

Her bosom shook inside her formal dress, a sight causing Kamito's heart to race uncontrollably.

"Hmm, w-where are you staring..."

Ellis glared at him.

"Uh... What's with that armor?"

Kamito frantically changed the subject. Ellis blushed in response.

"K-Kamito, are you saying you prefer yesterday's erotic armor?"

"N-No, that's not what I mean—"

"Yesterday's armor was apparently made by Rakka and Reishia as a joke. They told me that they never expected me to put it on for real—"

"...Yeah. I thought so."

Kamito understood. Even for a festival, wearing that kind of unsightly armor to patrol the streets would be too unusual.

"...What do you mean, you thought so!? So even you noticed there was something weird!?"

"No, umm..."

Confronted with the tearful and angry Ellis, Kamito averted his gaze awkwardly.

"...~Why did you not tell me!?"

"Oh, the new armor looks great on you."

"Eh—"

Kamito successfully changed the subject, causing Ellis's anger to be swept aside completely.

"...A-Are you serious?"

Her ponytail swayed this way and that.

This was a comment coming straight from his heart. Clad in mature-looking armor, Ellis looked more like a goddess ruling the winds rather than a stern and awe-inspiring knight.

"Better than the erotic armor... Yes?"

"Y-Yeah..."

Kamito nodded honestly.

"...I-I see. Good to know."

Face red, Ellis clutched her hem tightly.

At this moment...

"Stop flirting in front of a sacred church."

A displeased voice came from behind.

Turning around, Kamito found Greyworth arriving, dressed in a suit.

In combat attire, Virrey Branford was also with her.

"H-Headmistress!"

Ellis instantly straightened her posture.

"How shocking. Knights who should be upholding the Academy's morals are having a tryst here."

Virrey stared coldly at Ellis.

"Th-This is a misunderstanding! We are heading to the Academy town for patrols next—"

"I understand, captain. The one at fault is the boy over there, deceiving innocent and pure maidens."

Virrey glared even more sharply at Kamito.

Her eyes looked like they could murder someone.

"—Indeed, you are the Demon King's reincarnation, aren't you?"

"Demon King Solomon or whatever is just an old legend, right?"

"Regrettably, the Empire does not think so."

Kamito and Virrey's gazes clashed.

Both of them were about to draw their weapons.

"Dame Virrey, the Academy prohibits duels within its grounds."

Seeing this, Greyworth declared calmly.

Virrey shrugged with dissatisfaction—

"...Whatever. All shall become clear sooner or later."

Finally, she put down her hand that was placed on her gun.

"...B-By the way—"

Ellis spoke nervously.

"Why are you here, Headmistress?"

"I have a meeting with the Empire's bigshots. I don't even have the leisure to enjoy the Great Festival of the Spirits."

"A meeting... On this kind of occasion?"

"Yeah. Two days ago, a great incident apparently took place in a neighboring state."

Saying that, Greyworth's gray eyes narrowed and glowed sharply.

"The Theocracy apparently had an internal coup d'etat."

"Coup d'etat?"

Ellis widened her eyes greatly.

"As a secretive country, the details are unknown but according to reports from spies, Hierarch Rajihal Kahn was executed during a rebellion in the capital."

"Who is the mastermind?"

"According to reports, the eldest princess, Sjora Kahn."

"That witch—"

Ellis exclaimed in surprise.

"Since something like that happened, the neighboring states are not going to

remain silent—"

"...Assuredly so. This could very well spark a war."

Greyworth sighed. Her face looked a bit tired.

"...It must be tough for you, Headmistress."

Hearing Kamito's mutterings, Greyworth glared at him.

"Talking like it's not related to you. This meeting will also discuss whether to authorize an investigation of the underground facility mentioned last time. Whether you can retrieve your sword spirit or not will depend on this."

"...Will they authorize it?"

"The military will probably refuse. After all, underground facilities are mostly liabilities they have no wish of publicizing."

"No way—"

"Don't worry. I am no longer as influential as during my days in active service, but I still have a right to speak after all. It should be possible to authorize an investigation team assembled from a small number of people affiliated with the military."

"...Sorry for making so much trouble for you."

Kamito bowed his head.

"Hmph, this is my first time hearing something sincere from you without sarcasm."

"...Really?"

"Yeah, that's right. That mouth of yours keep saying rude things like witch or old hag."

"Unbelievable. How could someone say that to a beauty like you—"

"What...!?"

Greyworth was rendered speechless with her mouth open in shock.

"Dame Greyworth, it's about time—"

"...Y-Yeah. Then Ellis, I shall leave the commanding on scene to you."

"Yes, you can count on me!"

Greyworth departed, a little awkwardly.

Watching her leave—

"...The headmistress was shaken. How rare."

Ellis murmured to herself.

Part 5

The Academy town, located at the foot of the mountain where Areishia Spirit Academy was situated, had large crowds gathered.

The town was divided into five large zones based on the Five Great Elemental Lords. Open air stalls covered the road side space along the main roads passing through the town. At the plaza, there were even princess maidens sent from the Academy to perform ritual dances.

Unlike the Academy, nobles were rarely seen here. Most of them were local commoners. However, the gender ratio was still skewed towards females.

Kamito had never seen such lively streets before.

The aroma of food drifting from the open air stalls made him swallow his saliva involuntarily.

"We are responsible for the Undine Area near the outer gate, a place where leisure facilities prepared for the students are gathered. It is also the Academy town's central area."

Ellis explained while walking.

"With so many people, won't criminals try to sneak in?"

While walking and avoiding the crowds, Kamito muttered.

In actual fact, Kamito could invade any time he wanted.

"The main gate has a guardian spirit to perform identification checks. People are not allowed in without documents issued by the Empire. But it is true that people have gotten past it. You may not remember, but a few months ago, there was a black market merchant from Murders who infiltrated."

"Virrey Branford also forced her way in."

"That guardian spirit has been dismissed. Now, the Imperial Knights are serving as guards. Mere terrorists should not be able to force their way in."

"So we need to look out for spirits running amok?"

"Yes. Exactly."

Ellis nodded.

"By the way..."

Suddenly, she looked around uneasily.

"...S-Starting a while ago, I have been feeling gazes."

"...I don't think you're imagining things."

In fact, Ellis's appearance was still very attention grabbing amidst the festival's hustle and bustle.

Striking ice-blue hair. Stern and dignified dark-brown eyes.

Also, there was—

Her massive bust, quivering under her formal dress armor.

Walking beside her, Kamito could not help but feel very aware of that swaying entity during all this time.

"Ooh, I-I do not want to be stared at by any man apart from Kamito..."

Blushing, Ellis looked quite embarrassed.

"Knight lady from the Academy, here's a special discount for you!"

"Come check out my shop, my donuts are very tasty."

Unconcerned with Ellis's appearance, the various shop keepers called out to her one after another.

"You're not going to buy something?"

Seeing that, Kamito tried asking.

"We are currently on duty."

A serious answer very much in line with her style.

"Being hungry is not good, though."

"W-Well..."

Ignoring Ellis in her serious dilemma, Kamito bought a kebab sandwich with roasted meat.

Wrapped in the wheat bread, there was a generous amount of meat and vegetables topped with a spicy sauce.

The hot aroma was very appetizing.

"Here, we can eat this while we walk."

"Hmm, mmm..."

Bite.

Ellis took a bite out of the sandwich.

As expected of a young lady from a prestigious family, her manner of eating was very graceful.

"Th-This is very delicious...!"

After a taste, she widened her dark-brown eyes.

"Oh, so noble young ladies have never eaten this kind of thing before?"

"Do not take me for a fool. Of course I have eaten things like kebab sandwiches before."

Ellis pouted.

"However, eating like this while walking feels quite new as an experience."

"I see. But you look like you're not very used to eating this."

"What?"

"There's some sauce here."

Kamito used his finger to wipe the sauce next to Ellis's mouth and licked it off.

"...W-W-W-What...!"

Instantly, Ellis's face went bright red while her mouth opened and closed.

"What's wrong?"

"Y-You, to think you did that out in full public—"

Just at this moment...

"Hey there, knight lady!"

A five or six-year-old girl came up to Ellis.

"...Yes, what is the matter? Are you lost?"

Ellis instantly recalled her duties and recovered a solemn knight's expression.

The girl shook her head.

"Lady, you're an elementalist, right? I wanna see a spirit."

"My apologies, but summoning spirits recklessly on the streets is against school rules."

"But during festivals, there are many spirits."

"My contracted spirit is a pure combat type, so unless it is absolutely

necessary—"

"No, don't make things difficult for the knight lady!"

At this moment, a woman who appeared to be the child's mother came over and took the girl's hand.

"Sorry, miss knight. My daughter is too willful—"

However—

"Eeeee—, I wanna see a spirit, I wanna see—"

The child began to cry loudly.

The surrounding adults also began to clamor.

At this rate, the crowd was going to block the way.

"Well, just a look would be fine, right?"

"...I-I guess. Very well, this is an exception."

Coughing lightly, Ellis stroked the child's head.

Instantly, the girl's face brightened.

Ellis took a breath and raised her arm lightly—

"—Hailing from the far beyond, the violent demon wind spirit, Simorgh!"

She spoke the words of summoning.

Instantly, a whirlwind blew above and a demon bird appeared out of thin air, spreading its wings.

The surrounding spectators all cheered.

Seeing the demon wind spirit flying in the air, the girl widened her eyes—

Keeeeeeeeeee!

At this moment, Simorgh gave a great cry in the air.

Instantly, the girl's face went livid.

"Uwaaaaah! So scary!"

"There, there! The knight lady summoned it just for you!"

The girl ran away crying while her mother chased frantically.

The demon wind spirit landed on Ellis's shoulder, its shoulders slumping.

"...Looks like it scared her off."

"Even though the spirit is clearly so cool."

Hearing Kamito's comforting words, Simorgh cooed and called out.

—After that, Kamito and Ellis walked towards the central plaza.

There was a large spring at the plaza, attracting many spirits with its sacred properties.

"This is the famous Spring of Undine."

Ellis explained.

"Rumor has it that throwing in coins will grant wishes."

"Here..."

Indeed, there were many coins at the bottom of the spring.

Ellis took out silver coins from her pocket and quietly tossed one in.

Seeing her, Kamito did the same as her and tossed a silver coin.

"Ellis, what wish did you make?"

After he asked this...

"...S-Secret. What about you, Kamito?"

"Recovering my memory, first things first—That's it."

"I see."

Kamito's gaze settled on the surface of the spring water.

Reflected on it was his grownup sixteen-year-old self.

"Actually, I should have a wish I want the most, but I just can't remember it."

"Kamito, you—"

Ellis was just about to speak when...

Suddenly, a pillar of water rose from the spring.

"...!"

Bathed by a large amount of splashing water, standing in front of the spring, Ellis was thoroughly drenched.

"Ellis, are you okay?"

"Y-Yeah, just that my clothes are wet..."

Seeing Ellis soaked, Kamito felt his heart pound uncontrollably.

Her hair in a ponytail was soaked.

The jet-black formal dress clung tightly to her skin, revealing the outlines of her white underwear beneath.

Even the patterns of delicate lace surfaced clearly.

Kamito frantically diverted his gaze.

"A-Anyway, let's go somewhere with fewer people."

"I-Indeed! The clothes must be dried."

Taking Ellis by the hand, Kamito ran away from the plaza into a small alley.

While the main roads were filled with crowds, there were extremely few people in the alleys.

"O wind—"

Running behind a shop, Ellis chanted an incantation for wind.

A whirlwind swirled and started to blow her clothes dry. As a result, her skirt

fluttered and exposed white panties, causing Kamito to hastily turn his gaze away.

"Did that spring's spirit anger because I'm male?"

"No, I think it is likely that the spirit was intending to grant my wish."

"...What do you mean?"

"U-Uh... L-Letting Kamito witness my victory underwear, something like that..."

"...?"

Mixed in the sounds of the wind, Kamito could not quite catch what Ellis was saying—

"—Oh, you two are here. Kamito-kun."

A laid back voice was heard, causing Kamito to look back frantically.

Over there was—

"Fufu, am I disturbing the two of you?"

"L-Lurie-san—"

Lurie Lizaldia of the Numbers.

Dressed in vestments, her arms were holding a great amount of snacks including apple pie, sugar churros, roasted corn, a chocolate banana, etc.

On the side of her head was even a weird mask bought from a stall.

"Dame Lurie, why did you come here without even a bodyguard knight!?"

Ellis exclaimed in surprise.

"Why? Of course it's for sightseeing. It's been a while since I last visited a festival."

Her vestment's sleeves swayed. Seeing this, Ellis sighed.

"You cannot go without a bodyguard. If something were to happen to you, as one of the Numbers—"

"Don't worry. This Academy town is probably the second safest place in the entire Empire."

"Be that as it may—"

Ellis did not get to finish her sentence. At this moment...

A shocking explosion was heard, coming from somewhere in the Academy.

"...!?"

Translator's Notes and References

1. Note: Kamito went back to using *boku* here.

Chapter 9 - Academy Attacked

Part 1

Dressed in ritual attire, the twelve princess maidens had lost consciousness and collapsed by the side of the stone circle.

Just when the ritual was under way, a sudden flash of light erupted, blowing everything away in the surroundings.

Intense sparks flew out from the magic circle used for summoning spirits. The audience speechlessly watched the latest developments.

"...Could it be... the Gate opening failed?"

Collapsed on the ground, Fianna opened her eyes wide, exclaiming in shock.
(...No, that's not right. The ritual did not have any problems.)

Using the Gate for summoning was not very difficult magic in itself. Even if a summoned spirit went berserk, it seldom caused the summoning to fail.

Then did the Gate at the historical site show abnormalities?

(...That's not very possible either.)

Before constructing the magic circle, experts in historic sites should have conducted a thorough examination already.

In that case, the only remaining possibility was—

(...The *magic circle* itself was rewritten?)

"Calm down! Please calm down and evacuate."

"Rakka, go help the collapsed princess maidens!"

"...Right away!"

Despite the utmost efforts of the Sylphid Knights to respond, the audience were still on the verge of panic. If the commotion spread beyond the Academy, it could end up causing a tragedy of the worst kind.

(...I must find a solution.)

The reason had to be found, so that the Gate could be closed as quickly as possible. Otherwise, evil spirits from Astral Zero might use it to enter the human realm.

"Repair the magic circle! Everyone come and help!"

Fianna tried her best to stand up and rally the princess maidens. However—
Her body was violently stunned.

Seeing *that* appear before her eyes, she began to rue her naive thinking.

From the magic circle where sparks were scattering out, *something* was about to crawl out.

Covered by darkness resembling mist, there were pitch-black claws.

—A spirit.

A spirit giving off astounding miasma was currently being summoned here.
Furthermore, this was not the type of spirit residing in Astral Zero.

This was—

(Tuned specially for use in war, a militarized spirit—)

In the next instant, a howl tore through the atmosphere.

Part 2

"...Militarized spirits!?"

Looking at the sky, Ellis cried out.

Above the Academy, giant flying spirits were circling in the air.

Wrapped in darkness, spirits in the shape of winged dragons.

There were a total of three—no the numbers were still increasing.

"No way, the princess's ritual failed?"

"No, even if the gate opening failed, it would not cause militarized spirits to
—"

Ellis murmured in shock.

Militarized spirits were weapons specially tuned for war. They were mostly sealed in artifacts and under strict safekeeping by the military. At least, they were not things that could be summoned from Astral Zero.

"Did someone intentionally release militarized spirits? But more importantly, right now—"

The commotion in the plaza's direction was gradually expanding in scope.

The crowd was beginning to realize the abnormality of the situation.

Pitch-black winged dragons were circling in the air, causing destructive storms that smashed nearby buildings.

The earthquake-like sound and people's screams were all superimposed together.

Escaping from the plaza, the crowd instantly rushed into the alleys.

"—Kamito, above!"

Ellis chanted wind magic, bringing Kamito and Lurie together to a roof.

The militarized spirits spread their wings and shook the air with their roars.

Tiles of roofs were blown away, about to fall upon the dense crowds packed in the alleys.

"...Take this!"

Ellis mustered full strength and swung Ray Hawk.

The countless roof tiles were shattered by the howling gales.

"Are you okay!?"

"Y-Yeah..."

Kamito drew his sword from the waist and helped Lurie deflect small pieces of debris.

"...Thank you, Kamito-kun."

"Sorry, please protect yourself. I can't guarantee your safety with just this single sword here."

"Captain, over here!"

Footsteps from multiple people were heard on the roof.

The arrivals were the members of Team Froza in charge of security in the Academy town. They looked like they had not grasped the situation and everyone looked puzzled.

"Captain, what on earth is going on!?"

"...Someone released militarized spirits apparently."

"Anti-Empire terrorists?"

"...Who knows."

Ellis shook her head and stared at the berserk militarized spirit.

The spirit had gone completely out of control.

Normally, militarized spirits were supposed to be controlled by multiple elementalists. Releasing them like this meant deliberately letting them run amok.

Ultimately, how were the militarized spirits brought to the Academy?

This was a place where top-rate elementalists were gathered. Trying to smuggle artifacts containing sealed spirits should have been quickly discovered.

"The Gate was used huh—"

"Captain, orders please—"

Froza urged.

"I will lead a team to destroy them. Froza, you will be in charge of evacuating the audience. The rest of you, follow me."

"Y-Yes!" "Understood!" "Leave it to us!"

Three girls stepped up and released their respective elemental waffen.

Even among elementalists, those capable of releasing elemental waffen were not many. The members of the Sylphid Knights must be the Academy's elite, presumably.

However—

(Even so, mere students cannot handle militarized spirits—)

Kamito calmly reached a conclusion. Joining forces to handle one spirit might be possible, but defeating all seven militarized spirits was totally impossible.

As though reading Kamito's mind, Ellis looked back.

"Of course, this is only for buying time. Until the Imperial Knights arrive."

"...I see."

Naturally, the Academy town also had knights stationed.

After all, this Academy was also a strategic location for the military. The army, which stayed out of sight in respect for the student's autonomy under normal conditions, could not possibly stay their hand in times like these.

"What should I do?"

"Kamito, you stay here and protect Dame Lurie. Dame Lurie, may I trouble you to heal the wounded?"

"Sure, I got it."

Lurie nodded slightly.

"..."

Kamito subconsciously gripped his sword's hilt tightly.

(If I'm able to use an elemental waffe—)

The town was filled with panicking and fleeing crowds. Among them were many small children.

As a member of the Sylphid Knights, he felt frustrated that he could not help them.

However, pouring divine power into his spirit seal would probably cause another runaway reaction.

A shadow shaped like a giant winged dragon seemed to notice them.

Screeching with high pitch, it tore through the air and glided over.

"—It is coming, spread out!"

Under Ellis's orders, the girls wielding elemental waffen dispersed in three different directions.

"—Go forth and pierce, evil-vanquishing whirlwind!"

Right in front of the militarized spirit...

Ellis released a howling wind blade, forming a penetrating whirlwind.

The wind blade pierced the militarized spirit's mouth, skewering it.

"Yes—" "Do it now, attack!" "Take this!"

The girls of Team Froza assaulted the militarized spirit that was rolling in the air. Their coordination was excellent, as expected of a well-trained organization of knights.

Dealt with—Ellis murmured softly. But in that instant...

"Wait, the situation is a bit weird—"

"Eh?"

Hearing Kamito's warning, Ellis frowned.

Suddenly, the militarized spirit's body expanded all at once.

Then—

Its body, filled with black miasma, exploded in midair.

Part 3

"...No way... How could this happen..."

Looking up at the militarized spirits circling midair, Fianna exclaimed in despair.

Before her eyes were the ruins with the broken gate. The remains of the shrine that was blown away were scattered randomly all around.

Having lost her place in the palace, she had found somewhere she belonged for the first time.

But now, she could do nothing but watch as this precious place was being trampled.

The Academy had entered a state of emergency and was evacuating students and visitors.

Combat teachers, the Sylphid Knights and some of the students were heading to engage the enemies in battle but could not handle the militarized spirits.

(...One could hardly blame them.)

This was not a blade dance to make offerings to spirits.

Those in the Academy with real combat experience were extremely rare.

"It's my fault... It's my fault for the ritual's failure—"

Lips trembling nonstop, Fianna knelt down on the spot.

At this moment, one of the militarized spirits landed in front of Fianna.

"...!"

The black, winged dragon opened its jaws, preparing to swallow Fianna.

Apart from demon spirits afflicted with strange mental structures, spirits had no concept of eating humans. However, a portion of evil spirits would devour princess maidens' physical bodies to absorb divine power.

Fianna, with her divine power far surpassing average princess maidens, was top-quality prey.

"No... Don't come here...!"

Collapsed and sitting on the ground, Fianna kept backing away.

The winged dragon's great jaws opened, revealing a row of small but sharp teeth.

"...Kamito-kun!"

Fianna could not help but cry out his name—Just at that moment.

Whoosh—the sound of wind being sliced was heard.

"...Eh?"

In the next instant, the winged dragon's head was covered by crimson flames.

The militarized spirit made a frightening howl and jumped up.

"Fianna, are you okay!?"

Hurrying over was Claire, wielding the intensely burning Flametongue.

Her crimson hair fluttered in the wind. Her maid uniform was already full of holes.

"What on earth happened? Where did the militarized spirits come from?"

"No idea. But—"

Still sitting on the ground, Fianna shook her head.

"I believe that the magic circle controlling the Gate was rewritten."

"...Who did it—"

"..."

For an instant, the image of a certain person, wanted by the Empire, flashed across Fianna's mind, but...

"This is not Rubia-sama's style."

"Nee-sama won't do this kind of thing, okay!?"

"I know."

She absolutely would not permit a terrorist attack that caught ordinary people in it.

(...But I can't figure out the purpose.)

Some kind of organization, objecting to the Empire's rule, targeted the Great Festival of the Spirits as an attempt to undermine the Empire's authority—
This was plausible, but the plan would be far too crude if that were the purpose.

Perhaps this would plunge the Academy in turmoil for the short term, but the Empire's knights stationed at the Academy town would quickly arrive and suppress the attack.

(If only as a show of force, they used seven militarized spirits as disposable pawns?)

...Considering the large number of militarized spirits being consumed, this plan would be far too absurd.

(There's most likely another goal—)

"Fianna, it's coming!"

Claire screamed acutely at this time.

After the fire went out, the militarized spirit slowly crawled back up and roared threateningly.

"As expected of a militarized spirit, that's quite sturdy of it!"

Claire began to chant spirit magic. A triple release of extra large Fireballs in succession.

—Direct hits on target. The flaming explosive shockwaves swept over the entire area.

"Wait, Claire, are you trying to blow up the entire school yard!?"

"I'm not done yet. This kind of half-baked attack won't destroy a militarized spirit—"

As though to prove Claire's point—

Amidst dancing flames, a pitch-black winged dragon flew out.

Ascending up into the sky all at once, it glided down, accompanied by furious howls.

"—I knew you'd do that!"

Claire swung Flametongue.

The crimson slashing whip traced out a complicated trajectory, wrapping around the dragon's wing.

The militarized spirit lost its balance in the air. However—

Urgh... Gah... Ohhhhhhhh—!

The militarized spirit gnawed and shredded its own single wing.

"What—"

Miasma of darkness flowed out from the wound, instantly growing a new jet-black wing.

"I can't believe it has regeneration powers!?"

Recovering its ability to fly, the militarized spirit tore through the air and rushed over again.

"T-Take this, I'll strike you down!"

In response, Claire frantically invoked fireball magic repeatedly, but her offensive power was clearly weaker when used without chanting. The flames were easily deflected by the miasma enveloping the winged dragon's body.

"...!"

The winged dragon's sharp claws swung down. In that instant...

"Freezing fangs of ice, go forth and pierce—Freezing Arrow!"

The militarized spirit's giant body was pierced by countless arrows of ice.

Struck by the sudden attack, the winged dragon fell to the ground, turned into a giant block of ice.

A great dust cloud was produced, accompanied by intense earthquakes and rumbling.

"Hmph, right at a critical crisis—"

Wielding the magical bow of ice, Rinslet rushed over from a hill.

"Rinslet... Uh, thanks a lot."

"Oh my, that's quite honest of you."

"S-Shut up! ...Are the other princess maidens okay?"

"They've been evacuated by the Sylphid Knights already."

"Okay. Then before the Empire's proper knights arrive, let's stall for time. Fianna, can you stand?"

"...Yes, I'm okay."

Pressing on her painful legs, Fianna stood up.

She really was saved by Claire's forcefulness in attitude.

(...I just need to do what is within my ability right now.)

Fianna chanted the words of summoning, calling forth the knight spirit Georgios.

With Fianna in charge of support in the center, the trio swiftly formed a triangular defensive formation.

At this moment—

"Don't go to the frontlines. Stay back and focus on supporting us."

"—Eh?"

Looking back, they saw the teachers of combat courses standing behind them.

"We have no right to be teachers if we let students shield us."

One of them, Freya, chuckled lightly.

"Hmph, it's been a while since I got some exercise. This reminds me of my days in the knights!"

"We shall protect the students of the Academy."

Wielding their respective elemental waffen, they glared at the militarized spirit.

Combat teachers were either former soldiers or participants of the Blade Dance. Even with some diminishing of divine power, their skills still rivaled those of spirit knights in active service.

"But Sensei—"

"Don't worry. We just need to stall for time until the Imperial Knights arrive."

Freya gently put her hand on Claire's head.

—Suddenly.

"Giggle giggle... Gathered together, gathered together. Foolish insects."

"...!?"

A cute voice, one that did not belong to the tragic battlefield, caused everyone to look around.

It was not a real person's voice. This was a magical voice sounding directly in one's mind.

"...That is?"

Freya looked upwards and murmured.

Looking up, a girl could be seen riding on the back of a militarized spirit circling in the sky above.

Her golden hair was fluttering in the wind. Dressed in a military uniform of pure white, she was looking down at the ground.

On her left eye was an eye patch that did not match her look as a beautiful young girl.

"W-Who are you!?"

Claire yelled at the girl.

"Millennia Sanctus."

The girl smiled and reached for the eye patch over her left eye.

"Sent to this world—The *Evangelist* bringing prophesies of the end times."

The girl took off the eye patch, revealing the eye.

—Instantly, Fianna felt an intense chill down her spine.

(That's....!)

Even at this distance, it was clear from a single glance. Residing in that girl's eye was—

"...That child's eye, no way—"

Possessing outstanding potential like Fianna as a princess maiden, Claire also seemed to have noticed.

They noticed that what the entity residing in the girl's eye was.

"...Yes. It's the same as what we saw in the sanctuary of the Elemental Lords."

Fianna gasped and whispered.

Eating away at the Elemental Lords' minds, causing them to go insane, the Otherworldly Darkness.

Why was something like that inhabiting the girl's eye?

A scream suddenly came from behind.

Freya's and the other teacher's elemental waffen had released their waffen state at the same time and started attacking their own contractors.

"The spirits are going crazy!"

"I won't let them... Go forth and pierce, Ice Prison that freezes everything!"

Rinslet hastily released a hail of magical ice arrows.

Spirits that were struck were instantly locked away in prisons of magical ice.

"Heh, splendid. Seeing this eye without going berserk, your spirits."

Millennia Sanctus smiled tenderly.

"—As expected, you must have seen *that* inside the sanctuary of the Elemental Lords."

Part 4

The expanding body of the militarized spirit exploded.

High-density miasma of darkness was spreading, slowly covering the roof tops in the streets.

"Self-destructed!?" "W-What, what's going on!?"

"Iriga, Tissier, do not recklessly get close to it!"

Ellis hastily shouted.

—However, she was a step too late. Contaminated by the dark miasma, their elemental waffen turned into spirits and attacked the knights, their own contractors.

"Uwahhhh!" "No way, why—"

"...I will not allow this!"

Ellis swung Ray Hawk, flooring the berserk spirits.

The spirits turned into particles of light and dissipated in the air.

"Captain—"

"Relax. I did not kill your spirits."

"...Y-Yes. Thank goodness."

Pressing on their wounds from being bitten by their own spirits, the knights sat down where they stood.

"Are you okay? Allow me to have a look—"

Chanting healing incantations, Lurie healed all the wounds.

"Ellis, what's that?"

Seeing that, Kamito asked.

"..."

With solemn eyes, Ellis glared at the spreading darkness—

"...Could that be the darkness that is corrupting the Elemental Lords? But why—"

She murmured softly to herself.

—Just at this moment...

"Captain, it's the Imperial Knights!"

One knight pointed to the other end of the sky.

A squad of spirit knights in silver armor was hurrying towards the Academy city, driving a giant spirit.

Glasya-Labolas—A heavily-armed giant spirit tuned for use against large spirits.

They were planning to use a militarized spirit to get rid of the attackers all at once.

However—

"...Oh no!"

Ellis's scream resounded through the air in vain.

The giant spirit swung its fist at one of the militarized spirits.

Instantly the militarized spirit exploded again.

The released miasma of darkness swallowed the giant spirit and the squad of spirit knights.

"...How could this happen...!?"

Sounds of despair escaped from Ellis.

Swallowed by darkness, the giant spirit howled violently and started destroying surrounding buildings.

"Guh, damn it—"

"Hold on, Ellis!"

Seeing Ellis holding Ray Hawk, intending to rush over all on her own, Kamito frantically stopped her.

"Kamito, do not stop me. I will—"

"You won't succeed on your own."

Kamito said.

Indeed, Ellis's power far surpassed the level of students.

However, defeating a militarized spirit single-handedly was absurd.

"B-But at this rate, the town as well as our school will—"

"—I'll do it."

Kamito drew the sword from his waist.

"Since this sword is a normal weapon, even if it touches the darkness, it won't go berserk, right?"

"I-Idiot!"

Ellis roared loudly.

"Even for you, how could you do anything to a militarized spirit with nothing more than an ordinary sword!? Besides, you are currently far from peak condition—"

"—But, *I must protect.*"

—This was a feeling that even Kamito found strange himself.

Whether this town, this Academy or people's lives, for Kamito in his amnesiac state, he should not care about what happened to them. The Kamito back in the Instructional School would surely think that.

Back then, Kamito cared little even for his own life.

Wanting to protect something, wanting to protect someone, these feelings had never been felt.

Never been felt—That was supposed to be the case.

...But no, he could understand.

His current self was not the one from the time at the Instructional School.

The feelings of the pre-amnesiac Kamito were definitely lingering somewhere in the depths of his mind, resulting in this notion of wanting to

protect this town, this Academy and the young ladies who were his companions.

(...Yes, to protect. I absolutely will—)

—*Because I promised*, I promised to protect them well.

"...Kamito?"

Ellis watched Kamito with a surprised look on her face.

"Eh... Huh...?"

Tears fell to his feet.

"...Me... Why am I... crying...?"

Kamito muttered in shock.

He was not feeling sad. Nevertheless, tears were inexplicably spilling out, unstoppable.

...Incomprehensible. Why exactly was he crying? For whom was he crying?

However, inexplicably, he was able to imagine his reason for crying.

(...Yes. I must—)

I must have said that before.

—Towards a certain precious person, I promised to protect you.

But I failed.

I lost a certain precious someone.

Yes, probably—

—Kamito, I am waiting here.

—Waiting for you, Kamito, to return after fulfilling *her* promise.

That silver-white-haired girl had said that in the dream.

The promise with her—

"I—"

Kamito gripped his sword's hilt harder.

"Kamito-kun—"

Seeing Kamito like that, Lurie spoke up.

"So long as you have the will, there is nothing precious that you can't protect."

"...Yeah. I know."

"But you should possess enough power to protect."

"Dame Lurie, could it be that—"

Ellis suddenly came to a realization.

"—Your Demon Slayer possesses the strongest magic resistance. By my guess, even sufficient to resist that rampaging darkness."

"...Yeah."

Kamito concurred, staring at the seal on his right hand.

"B-But, if you lose control, Kamito, you will—"

"Yes, the risk does exist. But is there any other method to break through the current situation?"

"Well—"

As soon as she started speaking, Ellis found herself searching for words. But she had a point.

"What are you going to do, Kamito-kun?"

"—Go get my sword back."

There was no time to hesitate. Kamito acted decisively.

The girl with silver-white-hair had appeared in his dreams.

He felt certain that once she was retrieved, he would be able to protect this town.

"Time considerations?"

"The path leading to the underground facility should be connected to the Imperial Knights' third garrison point. Walking there on foot will take some time, but *flying* there should be quick."

Lurie turned her gaze to Ellis.

"...Understood. I will escort you two there. Team Froza will guide the crowd to evacuate."

"You can count on us!"

The girls answered, thumping their chests.

Ellis chanted a wind spell, resulting in swirling whirlwind.

"—Kamito, we are gambling everything on you."

Part 5

"—Right. The Gate on the forest's side should be opened too. Transfer people to Astral Zero."

At the meeting room on the school building's third floor—

Greyworth was using a communication spirit crystal to issue orders to teachers.

Outside the window, the Sylphid Knights could be seen guiding the evacuating crowds. Using the Gate located at the forest, students and visitors should be able to take refuge in a safe place for now.

"...How troublesome. To think it's the type that causes contracted spirits to go mad."

Standing by the window, Virrey Branford grumbled while firing her handgun.

The targeted crow-shaped spirit was blown away and destroyed.

The winged dragon militarized spirits were not the only threats.

Infected with madness, numerous spirits were attacking the school building.

Students and teachers had already left the school building to evacuate, hence Virrey was the only one protecting Greyworth. Also, because bullets with sealed spirits could not be used, she had to use a type of gun that shot out her divine power directly. Although there was no worry of spirits going mad, the consumption of stamina was quite pronounced.

"—I've seen that type of militarized spirit before."

Greyworth murmured at this time.

"The Nazgul series—an old type of spirit used for base assaults. Still in use until during the Second Ranbal War, two units were destroyed in battle. The remaining seven were sealed and abandoned, falling into the hands of Murders during the chaotic aftermath of the war, according to rumors."

"My, that's quite some detailed knowledge."

"Because I've infiltrated Murders before."

"Does this type have the ability to make spirits go mad?"

"No, even as militarized spirits, their power level can only be said to be mediocre. It's absolutely unheard of for militarized spirits to possess this kind of ability."

Virrey shook her head. Greyworth stared out the window and shrugged.

"If I had my elemental waffe, this level of militarized spirit could be instantly obliterated."

The Dusk Witch's personal sword, the Stormbringer, was a high-level demon spirit minion.

Also, a demon spirit, mad to begin with, could not go berserk.

"If your power was still intact, then this kind of terrorist attack wouldn't have happened in the first place."

"—Hmph, that's true too."

Greyworth nodded with a wry smile.

Indeed. Only a small number of people in the Empire knew that she had lost the power of spirit contracts. —Nevertheless, the mastermind behind the terrorist attack clearly knew that Greyworth had lost her power. Also, the terrorist attack made use of the ritual in the Great Festival of the Spirits, thus implying that there was undoubtedly a traitor in the Academy.

"Dame Greyworth, are you suspecting there's a traitor?"

"Of course. Given this kind of situation."

Greyworth pushed her glasses frame up slightly.

"Dame Virrey, do you know something about it?"

"The imperial family has also learned of a traitor among the Empire's top echelons. Now that things have come to this, I'll be blunt. The imperial family did suspect you of being a traitor at one point."

Virrey stared out the window while answering.

"Dame Lurie's protection and Kazehaya Kamito's surveillance are just the superficial mission. My true mission is to spy on you."

"Oh, and so?"

Greyworth asked, looking quite amused. Virrey shrugged.

"At least in this particular matter, you are innocent. Without my protection, you'd have died already. Although there are unidentified funds flowing into the Academy, well, that's not under my jurisdiction anyway."

"You're excellent, you know? You really make me feel like recruiting you as my subordinate."

Greyworth smiled wryly.

"For you who are so excellent, I have a favor to ask."

"No need for favors. I will protect you well. After all, it's part of the mission."

"No, not me. Could you protect the lad?"

"Kazehaya Kamito?"

Part 6

"...Open up, a paaaaaaaaath!"

Releasing a tornado, Ellis blew away the rampaging spirits.

"Found it, over there—"

The Imperial Knights' third garrison point was a facility neighboring the Academy town's outer wall. Ellis stopped in midair and took Kamito and Lurie to land at the center of the garrison point.

The parade ground, opened for people to take refuge, was already packed completely.

There were three spirit knights stationed here with roughly fifty ordinary soldiers. Apparently, the spirit knights had already mobilized to engage the militarized spirits in battle and were therefore not present.

"Y-You, what are you doing so suddenly?"

A sword-wielding male soldier ran over frantically.

...Well, this was a sudden landing from the air after all. Being treated as someone suspicious was only natural.

"I am the captain of Areishia Spirit Academy's Sylphid Knights, Ellis Fahrengart. I request the Imperial Knights' assistance."

"...Assistance huh?"

Realizing he was facing the Fahrengart family's daughter, the soldier's

attitude changed.

"Yes. I hope to enter the old military installation underground."

"...The old military installation? Why on earth at this time—"

"This is necessary precisely to change the current situation."

"B-But even for Duke Fahrengart's granddaughter, without authorization—"

"Okay, that's enough. Excuse me—"

Lurie stepped forward and lightly touched the soldier's forehead—

"Could you lead us to the entrance to the underground facility?"

"...Roger that. Come this way please."

The soldier nodded expressionlessly and immediately started walking silently.

"The authority of Numbers has taken effect eh?"

"...No, what took effect was probably your magic—"

Commenting snidely with his eyes half-narrowed, Kamito followed Lurie and Ellis behind the soldier.

The entrance to the underground facility was located inside a massive weapon storage.

However, the entrance was sealed securely by a massive stone tablet with spirit language carved on it.

"Dame Lurie, this is a seal of the highest level—"

"Don't worry. Leave it to me."

Lurie lightly touched the stone tablet's surface.

Next, the spirit language carvings glowed faintly and the stone tablet opened up immediately.

A metal staircase, covered with rust stains, extended forward into bottomless darkness.

"Amazing..."

"This is nothing. The Numbers are bestowed with the authority to lift seals up to Level 3."

Lurie chuckled then lit a magical light on her fingertip and started down the stairs.

"I-It is dangerous! Allow me to go first—"

Wielding Ray Hawk, Ellis hastily rushed to the front.

Part 7

Drip, drip, drip—

Kamito's group walked along the passage to the underground facility amidst sounds of water dripping.

Unattended for decades, the underground facility was very decrepit already. The ceiling had collapsed in many places, forming piles of debris.

"The air is very musty, almost as though it was left behind from the darkness of the Ranbal War."

Walking in front, Ellis gave her comment.

"To me, this actually feels nostalgic instead."

Kamito was long used to this kind of suffocating atmosphere.

The presence of death, impossible to dispel—Just like at the Instructional School.

"Research on Cursed Armament Seals was apparently conducted here."

"No way, Cursed Armament Seal research took place even underground below the sacred Academy?"

"Students from over there were apparently used for experiments. Of course, they were volunteers."

Hearing Lurie's words, Ellis bit her lip with a complicated expression on her face.

"Why didn't the Empire scrap that kind of place?"

"Probably impossible to scrap due to its sheer size. This was a facility originally rebuilt from ancient ruins. Most likely, even in the army itself, no one knows fully how large it actually is—"

At this moment, walking in front, Ellis stopped in the center of a spacious hall.

"—Over here. The coordinates for the temple above ground."

"Here?"

Kamito looked around the temple's hall, all surrounded by walls of rock.

"I don't see anything?"

There was nothing except abandoned experimental apparatus and piles of debris.

There was not a single sign of the Demon Slayer.

"Does your spirit seal have any reaction?"

"..."

Kamito closed his eyes and focused his attention to the spirit seal on his right hand.

"It feels like I can sense a presence..."

"Don't worry. The Burial Chamber is a magical and special dimension and does not exist at physical coordinates—So, it will appear so long as you have a need for it."

"So long as I have a need for it...?"

Hearing Lurie's calm explanation, Kamito felt a strange sense of dissonance and turned his head to look back.

"Yes, for example—"

Lurie smiled tenderly.

"When it senses that your life is in danger, yes?"

"—Eh?"

In the next instant, a blade stabbed into Kamito's chest.

Chapter 10 - Releasing the Sealed Sword

Part 1

"...Gah... Huff—"

The black blade was dyed with blood.

Kamito watched in shock as this sword stabbed into his own heart's location.

"Luri...e... Why...?"

"Sorry, Kamito-kun."

She smiled with a troubled expression.

As though feeling sadness from the bottom of her heart.

Whoosh—She swiftly pulled out the sword held in her hand.

"Ughh... A-Ahhhhhhh...!"

A great amount of blood gushed out, dyeing Kamito's uniform red all over.

With that, he collapsed on his knees.

(...What? What on earth happened?)

Unable to grasp the situation. Why did she—

"—Kamito!"

In the underground hall, Ellis's scream was heard.

She rushed over to Kamito who was collapsed in a pool of blood, pressing a healing spirit crystal against him.

The sacred light of healing enveloped Kamito's entire body—

"It's useless. Wounds inflicted by this sword cannot be healed by something of that sort."

However, a cold voice came from behind.

Holding the bloodstained sword, she looked down at the two of them indifferently.

"Dame Lurie...!"

Ellis looked back and readied Ray Hawk in a stance to protect Kamito.

Her dark-brown eyes were filled with intense rage.

"Why did you do something like this..!? You, why on earth—"

"Please put your weapon away, Ellis. I have no interest in killing an unrelated girl."

Lurie spoke coldly while flinging the blood off the jet-black blade.

"Didn't I say already? Obtaining the Demon Slayer is my lord's wish."

"...Est?"

Ellis spoke while glaring at her angrily.

"Est is Kamito's contracted spirit. She can't possibly be taken away—"

"It's possible. Given Kamito-kun's current condition."

Saying that, Lurie reached out into empty space.

(...Wh...at...?)

Something resembling a crack appeared in a space where nothing existed earlier.

On the other side of the crack, several flashing geometric patterns appeared.

"The Burial Chamber—As expected, it reacted to the Demon King's life and death crisis."

"Burial... Chamber... Come again?"

In his hazy consciousness, Kamito muttered.

"The treasure vault inherited by the legitimate Demon King. In actual fact, I

didn't want to resort to such violent means to begin with, but given your current state, Kamito-kun, there's no way you could open the Burial Chamber through your own will, is there?"

Lurie continued while reaching into the crack in space.

"The Demon Slayer is being kept in the Burial Chamber in its materialized form and currently with its connection to Kamito-kun interrupted. This is a perfect opportunity to intervene."

"...Could it be that those militarized spirits, you are the one!?"

Ellis cried out with an expression of trepidation.

Was it that in order to distract the Imperial Knights and lead Kamito to this place where Est was sealed, a large-scale act of terrorism was perpetrated—

"Tampering with the princess's magic circle was not difficult. Neither Greyworth nor Virrey ever suspected me, one of the Numbers, of being the traitor."

"...Dame Lurie, as the noblest healer, why did you—"

"Didn't I say so already? Because my lord wishes to obtain the sacred sword."

She pulled her hand out from the crack in space.

Held in her hand was a sword bound by countless chains.

(That... is...!)

Kamito recognized instinctively.

That sword was the girl he had seen in his dream—the Demon Slayer.

"—Thank you for your generosity, Kamito-kun."

Lurie pulled the sword out with her slender arm.

"W-Wait up!"

Seeing that, Ellis yelled loudly and swung Ray Hawk.

This was a completely merciless strike. However—

Lurie's figure vanished. In the next instant, accompanied by a dull and heavy sound similar to bone being crushed, Ellis was easily sent flying into one of the rock surfaces.

"Ell...is...!"

"You would do well to value your life more. I won't hold back from a killing move next time."

Swinging the Demon Slayer in her left hand in an experienced manner, she taunted.

(What's going on... That power...)

Lying in a pool of blood, Kamito could not help but groan.

As a healer, Lurie Lizaldia should be unversed in swordsmanship.

However, the skill she had just displayed was on the level of a knight's swordsmanship—in fact, that of a sword master.

Was the impression she had given off until now all an act for the sake of concealing her true power—

"Farewell, Kamito-kun. Most likely, we shall never meet again—"

The Numbers woman turned her heels and walked towards the darkness.

The crack in space closed up and the surroundings were plunged into darkness once more.

"Wait... Wait..."

As though trying to grab the gradually distant Demon Slayer, Kamito reached out with a trembling hand.

But it was not enough. He failed to protect again.

(I... have once again—)

As blood loss continued, his consciousness gradually grew distant.

Just as he was about to lose consciousness, Kamito yelled.

As if pleading to the departing sword one last time to make it stay.

(...Please, Est... Lend to me, lend me enough power to protect!)

—Just at this moment.

The seal on his extended right hand gave off powerful light.

Part 2

"Teachers, please retreat—"

Saying that, Fianna commanded Georgios, wielding his shield, to advance.

"B-But—"

In the middle of her sentence, Freya stopped talking.

Under conditions of contracted spirits going mad, the teachers were only a liability.

"...Understood. Your spirits are okay?"

"Yes, apparently so—"

Scarlet, Fenrir and Georgios—These three spirits remained sane and maintained their elemental waffen states. As for whether it was because these three were high-level spirits or for some other reason, the answer was currently unknown—

Using magic to create shadows by her feet, Freya picked up wounded teachers and disappeared into the shadows.

Taking the place of the departed teachers, Claire rushed forward, wielding Flametongue.

"—Take this and turn into charcoal!"

A crimson slash traced out an arc, producing a wall of flame on the ground.

"—Fufu, that kind of fire cannot stop Nazgul, you know?"

Riding on the back of a winged dragon, Millennia Sanctus smiled with a chuckle.

The militarized spirit's roar shook the atmosphere, blowing out the burning flames.

"—That's Dispel, it neutralizes ordinary spirit magic!"

Fianna issued a warning.

"...Then how about this!?"

Claire closed her eyes and injected her imagination into Flametongue in her hand.

She injected images of the strongest flames that incinerated all creation to naught.

"Namely, the true flame beyond this world—End of Vermillion!"

Flametongue instantly glowed red and produced a howling tempest.

—Flames that existed in neither Astral Zero nor the human realm.

The power of the true flame, passed down the Elstein lineage, was added to Scarlet.

The slash, glowing with crimson light, instantly destroyed a militarized spirit's wing.

"Heh, so that is the Flame usurped by the Elstein's princess maiden—"

Millennia's lips distorted into a grin.

"That which Volcanicus desired greatly."

"You know about this flame!?"

Claire exclaimed in shock. Who exactly was this girl—

"But it's useless unless you can use that power properly."

Millennia chanted an incantation. A sword of light appeared in the girl's hand and was fired towards Claire.

Manifesting the true flame required extreme concentration. Maintaining the flames with all her effort, Claire evaded a step too late.

—Immediately, numerous swords of light struck Claire all over her body.

"...Tsk, ahhh... Guh...!"

"—Fenrir!"

Rinslet gave orders. Instantly, the magic bow of ice turned into a direwolf. Fenrir took a mighty leap, used its mouth to pick up Claire by the nape and pulled her back to retreat.

"Thanks for saving me, good doggy."

Enduring the pain from all over her body, Claire stumbled and stood up. Any disruption to her concentration would likely cause the True Flame to extinguish. The enemy saw through her weakness completely.

"Claire, don't go at it recklessly on your own."

Rinslet released the magic bow again and shot a series of arrows to pin down the enemy.

However, for militarized spirits possessing high magic resistance, the cursed ice did not have any obvious effect.

—Just at this moment, scattered in three directions, the militarized spirits' bodies expanded—

Black breath was then exhaled.

"O knight, protect thy vassals—Save the Queen!"

Fianna instantly released her elemental waffe of the rapier.

A shield of light appeared all around, deflecting the dark breath—

(...Could this be the Otherworldly Darkness as well!?)

But the shield of light, which was logically supposed to neutralize the darkness attribute, was slowly being eroded and weakened.

"Fufu, how much longer can you endure?"

Millennia Sanctus smiled in mockery.

Part 3

"No way—"

Lurie Lizaldia's face showed wavering for the first time.

"...That sword... is my... sword—"

Kamito stood up unsteadily from the pool of blood.

Not to the point of being all covered in wounds, but Kamito felt quite incredible that he was still conscious.

His right hand dangled powerlessly. Branded on the back of that hand, the spirit seal flashed intensely.

As though crying in lamentation.

"The connection to the sword spirit should have been interrupted completely
—"

Unbelievable—Making a face that expressed that, Lurie gasped.

The Demon Slayer in her hand showed almost no change at all.

But Kamito knew.

That sword was calling for Kamito.

Terminus Est—The girl with silver-white hair whom he had seen in his dream—

With a trembling hand, Kamito drew the sword at his waist, glaring murderously at Lurie.

"Lurie... That sword, give me... Return it...!"

Hence—

"...Kamito-kun, you really scare me."

Lurie stabbed the Demon Slayer into the ground.

"There is still value in using you, so I didn't want to kill you originally—"

Then she raised her other hand, holding the jet-black sword.

"But if you continue to live, you could very well end up a hindrance to that person."

Instantly, the murderous intent given off Lurie Lizaldia brushed past Kamito's skin.

This dense aura of murderous intent was enough to cause an intense chill down one's spine.

"...Is that thing your elemental waffe?"

The jet-black sword gave off an ominous aura. No matter how you looked, it did not look like it carried the holy attribute.

"Mournblade—a minion that's a pure demon spirit."

Lurie injected divine power, causing countless blood vessels to pop up on the demon sword's blade surface.

This strange appearance, resembling a hybrid between metal and a living creature, caused Kamito to gasp.

"A holy spirit and a demon spirit—A *double contractor* huh."

Double contractors were not particularly rare in themselves. However, due to the instabilities in divine power caused by contracts with multiple spirits, almost no one used it officially.

Furthermore, Kamito never expected one of the spirits to be a demon spirit

which could not be commanded without special talents.

"Poor Kamito-kun. At least, you shall become food for this child."

Lurie licked the demon sword's blade.

"—Don't underestimate an Instructional School's assassin."

Saying that, Kamito kicked the ground forcefully. Staying conscious under his condition of blood loss was very hard. Unlike a blade dance of clashing swords, he had to end things in an instant.

(—I'll end this battle with this one strike!)

Kamito poured as much divine power as possible into the Sylphid Knights' sword—the sword of mithril.

Massive divine power flowed out from the lamenting seal on his right hand.

Lurie Lizaldia swung her demon sword—*So fast!*

Confronted with the demon sword, approaching before his eyes—Kamito did not evade but stepped forward bravely and decisively.

Assassination technique—Flashing Fang.

Enveloped in divine power, the mithril slid over the demon sword's blade, making a beeline for her throat—!

But the flashing murderous blade—

Was *eaten* by the demon sword's blade.

"...Wh...at!?"

Lurie narrowed her eyes and recited:

"—O Mournblade suck the Demon King's blade to your heart's content."

The demon sword's blade writhed like a creature, instantly swallowing the mithril sword. Next, the gluttonous demon sword extended blood vessel-like tentacles, biting Kamito's throat.

"...Guh... A-Ahhh, ahhhhh...!"

Numerous teeth appeared on the demon sword's tentacles, gradually stealing Kamito's blood—

(Damn... it... I... will...)

Losing brightness in the seal, his right hand dangled vertically.

Just at this moment...

"—Let go, Kamitooooooooo!"

A yell was heard.

Recovering consciousness, Ellis charged Lurie to engage at close range, making a thrust with her full strength.

"Tsk...!"

Lurie clicked her tongue briefly and withdrew the demon sword.

Without letting go of that opening, Ellis desperately launched a forceful offensive.

In the darkness, intense sparks splashed about.

"...Ellis—"

"Kamito, I will absolutely protect you!"

While she yelled, Ray Hawk's spear tip gave off dazzling light.

"Please endure—Simorgh!"

"...A waffe release!?"

Lurie exclaimed in surprise.

This was a skill to deliberately make the elemental waffe go berserk in exchange for power transcending limits.

An astounding storm was released from the spear's tip, howling in the

subterranean hall.

"Hahhhhhhh!"

"...Damn, this..."

Lurie was being pushed away by the violent wind pressure.

Slight anxiety crept onto her face—

"I already warned you, the next time will be a killing move—"

Mournblade's tip flew straight at Ellis, piercing the heart's location.

However—

"...Guh... Ow, ahhhhhhhhh...!"

"Wh...at...!?"

Despite having her heart pierced, Ellis continued to pour divine power into her elemental waffe.

The howling tempest turned into numerous blades, slashing Lurie's vestments open.

"...Ell...is...!"

"Kamito... Now, hurry and... escape...!"

"...!"

—Throb.

Suddenly, Kamito felt a bout of pain in his head.

This scene gave Kamito a sense of deja vu.

A sword stabbed into the chest. In order to protect Kamito, the girl who sacrificed her life and disappeared.

Gorgeous black hair. A dress in the color of night. Eyes where dusk resided.

—Throb. Throb.

Kamito felt cracks appearing over his sealed memories.

The sealed and suppressed emotions were gushing out as though a dam had ruptured.

—Throb. Throb. Throb. Throb.

(...Yes, right... Recall, Kazehaya Kamito!)

While crawling on the ground, Kamito clenched his fist tightly.

Before him, a girl was pitting her life in a fight to protect Kamito.

For the sake of protecting this noble, serious and awkward knight...

(I don't want to lose anything anymore. I don't want to lose—)

Kamito infused divine power into the spirit seal on his right hand.

Sparks splashed out intensely. The sword spirit's power of steel was flowing in reverse.

At this rate, it was probably going to run out of control again. However—

Gathering his remaining willpower, Kamito suppressed it.

Then he faced the fragments of memories sealed in the depths of his consciousness.

Reaching out towards those fragments, he cried out.

(So please, return my memories—*Restia*!)

Instantly, his consciousness turned blank.

Part 4

Surrounded by endless emptiness that stretched on to who knows where—

A girl's figure surfaced.

Beautiful, jet-black wings. A cute girl dressed in a dress the color of night.

Dusk-colored eyes. Gazing at Kamito as though in a dilemma, she smiled.

"...You remember everything now, Kamito."

"Yeah."

Kamito nodded in response.

—Yes, the instant he called out her name, Kamito remembered everything.

What had happened at the sanctuary of the Elemental Lords. In order to save Kamito whose consciousness was being possessed by Darkness Elemental Lord Ren Ashdoll, Restia had sacrificed herself and was destroyed.

(...I killed her, by my own hand.)

The girl, whom he had promised back in his childhood days to protect her—

He had killed her by his own hand.

Hence, the girl appearing before his eyes now could not be Restia.

Most likely, she was—

"Restia sent to my consciousness, her psyche?"

"Correct—"

Saying that, she gently caressed the back of Kamito's right hand.

Est's emblem of the intersecting swords. Carved over that, the emblem of the moon was Restia's.

"...Stay here, forever, Restia."

"What a troubling guy you are. It wasn't easy making you forget."

Restia before him was making a complicated expression, unclear whether she was laughing or crying.

"You sealed my memories to prevent me from despairing."

"If I remained forgotten, perhaps you could have lived on in peace as a normal human rather than the Demon King—"

"...Possibly."

In fact, his life in the Academy during his amnesia was not bad at all. Quite delightful. Supposing he remained in memory loss, perhaps he could continue to live that sort of ordinary school life.

"But you chose to retrieve your memories—*By your own will.*"

"That's what you must have believed as well. You believed I will open the seal of my memories myself."

"...Yes. Indeed, I did hope for that."

Restia smiled and gently embraced Kamito, kissing him on the cheek.

Clad in her dress of darkness, she was beginning to dissipate like mist.

"I am here, Kamito. Undoubtedly here in your heart—"

"Yeah, I know."

She was there, supporting Kamito's heart.

Kamito tightened his embrace of the gradually disappearing darkness spirit girl and said his farewell.

Part 5

"...Guh... Ah..."

While Ellis collapsed like a stringless puppet, the howling storm disappeared as a result.

"...Seriously, what a pain."

Pulling out the demon sword from Ellis's chest, Lurie wiped off the splattered blood.

Things were taking longer than expected. Millennia Sanctus was probably impatient, waiting above ground.

Glancing at the two, collapsed on the ground, Lurie turned around and left.

Walking towards the Demon Slayer stabbed into the ground, she reached out to draw it.

Crack—

"What!?"

Lurie frantically pulled her hand back.

As soon as she touched the hilt, *her left hand had suddenly turned into stone.*

"The sacred sword's curse!? Why—"

At this moment, she sensed someone standing up behind her.

"Sorry. I guess she doesn't want to be touched by anyone apart from me."

"...Impossible, you shouldn't be able to stand—"

Lurie cried out in shock.

But soon, she quickly noticed. Kamito's expression had changed.

"—Yeah. I remember now, everything."

Kamito reached out lightly in the air.

In that direction was the Demon Slayer, stabbed into the ground.

With a light clench of his fist, the chains wrapped around the blade were blown away, one after another.

"...Sorry to make you wait."

Then Kamito spoke:

"—Come, *Est!*"

Part 6

Responding to his words, the sword embedded in the ground vanished.

Immediately, a dazzling flash of light erupted before Kamito's eyes and a young girl appeared.

Shining, silver-white hair. Violet eyes of mystery.

Her legs covered by kneesocks, this body was as adorable as a snow fairy's.

The sword spirit—Terminus Est.

Kamito's contracted spirit, the best partner.

"—Sorry you had to wait so long, Est."

"Yes. I have waited a long time, Kamito."

Est nodded, then she hugged Kamito's arm tightly.

Instantly, Kamito felt his body become as sturdy and resilient as steel.

This was the blessing conferred on his physical body once the connection with his contracted spirit was restored.

"Ellis, it's okay now. You retreat first."

Saying that, Kamito went up and shielded Ellis behind him.

"Kamito, y-you are seriously... fine?"



Ellis murmured with worry.

She did not mean his health but was worrying about the recovery of his memory.

"...Yeah."

Kamito nodded slightly and stared at the spirit seal on his right hand.

Restia had left her psyche within Kamito's.

This was to allow Kamito to retrieve his memories when he desired power by his own will.

Even if to respond to Restia's intentions, now was not the time for despair.

Because having the courage to confront despair and take action—That was her wish.

(...Restia is here. Right in my heart.)

As though responding to Kamito's voice, the moon's emblem flashed with light.

"...I see."

Seeing this, Lurie groaned in her throat.

"You and that sword spirit, your hearts are as one—"

Wielding the pulsating Mournblade in both hands, she glared coldly at Kamito.

"The Demon Slayer—if it cannot be taken, I have no choice but to destroy it."

Instantly, the demon sword's blade produced countless tentacles, *biting Lurie's own body.*

"...Wha!?"

"O demon spirit Mournblade, feed on my blood, turn into my strength!"

Thud—The demon sword pulsated strongly.

The tentacles wrapped around her gradually expanded, fully sucking Lurie's blood.

The demon sword's blade was dyed with the color of blood while divine power expanded rapidly—!

"Kamito, that's dangerous."

"Seems like it..."

Kamito licked his lips and muttered.

The demon sword exuded great pressure, rivaling Greyworth's Stormbringer.

Most likely, Lurie intended to decide the battle with this attack.

But that suited Kamito's intentions just fine—

"We're up, Est."

"Yes. I am your sword, your wish is my command—"

Hold Est's hand, Kamito chanted the words of releasing.

—Dispassionate Queen of Steel, the sacred sword that destroys evil!

—Now form a sword of steel and be the power in my hand!

Est's body vanished into thin air, immediately, a shining blade of steel manifested in Kamito's hand.

Possessing the alias of the Demon Slayer, the strongest sword spirit.

On the blade's surface, there was roving jet-black lightning.

"...This is!?"

Kamito widened his eyes. Suddenly, he heard Est's voice in his mind.

—The darkness spirit allowed me to inherit part of her power.

—She told me to use this power to protect you, Kamito.

"...Restia huh?"

Kamito realized and cast his gaze upon the Demon Slayer's blade.

On the flat of the blade, the sword was engraved with spirit language.

This was its proof as the legitimate Demon King's weapon of choice, selected by Restia Ashdoll as the Demon King's guide.

On a foundation of steel's affinity, inheriting the power of darkness, its name was—

The Demon King's Sword—Terminus Est Zwei.

The engravings of spirit language flashed intensely, releasing sword pressure that shook the atmosphere.

At the same time, Lurie Lizaldia roared.

"Soul devouring king of demon swords, slaughter mine enemies—Bloody Strike!"

Dyed with fresh blood, the bulging crimson blade gave off a great scream that sounded like metallic friction.

Carrying massive miasma, the mass of divine power was released towards Kamito.

"...Kamito!"

Ellis screamed out, but Kamito stood his ground, readying his sword to take the attack head on—

"Go forth and pierce, all-annihilating demon lightning of punishment—Vorpal Blast!"

Enveloped in jet-black lightning, the Demon King's Sword was swung horizontally.

This was the demon sword technique converting one's own divine power into the darkness attribute.

At the same time, it was the prided technique of the Strongest Blade Dancer three years ago—Ren Ashbell.

Amplified by Terminus Est, the demon lightning of darkness vaporized the ground, clashing head on with the crimson divine power that Lurie had shot out.

The expanding divine powers resisted each other in midair, stopping.

The ground surface was being dug up, causing countless pieces of shattered rubble to swirl in the great hall.

"...Ohhhhhhhhhh!"

Kamito roared, pouring as much divine power as he could into the Demon Slayer.

The appearing emblem of the moon and sword gave off dazzling light.

"—Defeat is impossible!"

"Wh...at...!"

Lurie Lizaldia's expression distorted. Instantly—

The demon lightning of darkness forced the crimson divine power back—

In this manner, it devoured Lurie's body completely.

Part 7

As the rampaging lightning strike subsided, after the billowing dust cloud settled—

"...I won... huh...?"

Exhaling, Kamito lowered his sword and muttered.

There was no one in front of him in this space. Everything had been annihilated without trace.

This was the result of releasing the sealed Est's power all at once. No holding

back or mercy at all. Since this was not Astral Zero, it was possible that Lurie was charred into ash. However—

—No, I believe she escaped.

Est's voice was heard in his mind at this time.

"...Really?"

...Due to having that kind of premonition inexplicably, Kamito was not surprised. Although it was a shame that she escaped, there were more important things right now.

Looking back, Kamito held the collapsed Ellis's hand. There was a great amount of blood flowing from her chest.

"Ellis... Damn it..."

Kamito was unable to use healing spirit magic. Although the sword spirit possessed the blessing of steel, its effects were limited to his body only.

"Kami...to, I am fine... Hurry, head over to the others..."

Ellis groaned feebly. She looked like she was about to lose consciousness.

"How can I abandon you in this state!? At least I have to give first aid treatment—"

Just at this moment...

—"Is that Kazehaya Kamito over there?"

"...!?"

Kamito turned his head to face the voice's direction, only to see Virrey emerging from the darkness.

Seeing Kamito and Ellis, she quickly understood the situation.

"...I never expected Dame Lurie to be the traitor."

"Yeah. The Umbra's investigative skills aren't so hot after all."

"...I can't refute that."

Surprisingly, Virrey admitted honestly. She took out a healing spirit crystal from her pocket.

"Why are you here?"

"On Greyworth's orders. To take you over."

"...That old hag really loves ordering people around."

Kamito sighed. Holding the Demon Slayer, he stood up.

"Kamito, use my demon wind spirit."

In response, still collapsed on the ground, Ellis spoke to Kamito.

She released her elemental waffe and a giant demon bird immediately appeared. The majority of spirits aligned to the wind attribute were capable of autonomous action to some extent even without their contractor by their side.

"...My comrades... The Academy, please."

"...Yeah, don't worry."

Kamito nodded lightly and grasped the feet of the demon wind spirit as it spread its wings.

Part 8

"No good, the barrier can't be sustained anymore—!"

Fianna cried out. Corroded by darkness, Save the Queen was about to vanish. The winged dragon spewed out Otherworldly Darkness that flowed down the hill area and gushed forth.

"Fufu, it's useless. Be devoured by darkness just like that—Hmm?"

Suddenly, Millennia Sanctus frowned.

She looked up in the air and was rendered speechless. Claire and the girls also turned their gazes up—

Only to see a demon bird spreading its massive wings, flying overhead.

"...That's Ellis's demon wind spirit!?"

Claire cried out. Furthermore, holding onto its feet was—

"K-Kamito!" "Kamito-san!?" "Kamito-kun!"

"—Sorry for making you all wait."

Yelling at the same time, Kamito released his grip on the demon wind spirit.

Holding the Demon Slayer, he descended from the air. Swinging the tip of his blade down, he smashed the head of one of the militarized spirits.

Gahhhhhhhh!

Having lost its head, the militarized spirit's giant body collapsed, struggling on the ground, disappearing into thin air.

"One down huh—"

Flinging away the darkness stuck to the blade, Kamito muttered.

"Kamito, your memory is back!"

"Yeah. Sorry for causing everyone so much trouble—"

Saying that, Kamito turned around. He glared at the vestment-clad girl riding on the militarized spirit's back and said:

"—So it's you, the one who released the militarized spirits."

Faced with the serious killing intent exuded from Kamito, Millennia's face twitched.

"Could it be that Yggdra failed?"

"...Yggdra?"

Hearing the unfamiliar name, Kamito frowned.

However, Millennia ignored him and raised her hand lightly in the air.

"—Then there's no point in staying here."

Instantly, four militarized spirits raised their scythe-like necks towards Kamito.

"Kamito, they're coming!"

Seeing that, Claire cried out. But Kamito stood his ground and silently gripped his sword.

"Let's go, Est—"

—Yes, Kamito.

Having become the Demon King's weapon of choice, Terminus Est was infused with the entirety of Kamito's divine power.

Accordingly, a strike of jet-black lightning erupted from the tip of its blade.

The seal on his memories had been released—At the same time, the skills branded upon Kamito's body were also released.

Not the Instructional School's assassination techniques but the Strongest Blade Dancer's sword arts.

Four militarized spirits roared, charging and causing the ground to rumble. Faced with these giant bodies, capable of trampling armies of several thousand troops, Kamito faced them head on.

Then just as the militarized spirits were all in a line, in that instant...

"I'll show you my true blade dance—"

Kamito instantly exhaled all the air in his lungs and took a leap.

"Absolute Blade Arts — Destructive Form, Bursting Blossom Spiral Blade Dance - Eighteen Consecutive Strikes • Lightning Flare!"

Numerous slashes and jet-black lightning raced in all directions.

Four units of Nazgul were instantly turned to ash and disappeared into thin

air.

Kamito landed and stabbed his sword into the ground.

—By the time he noticed, Millennia Sanctus had already vanished from sight.

Epilogue

Part 1

—In this manner, this tragic crisis, unprecedented in the Academy's entire history, finally reached a close.

The militarized spirits sent to town were all driven off, thus ending the turmoil in the streets.

The rampaging spirits were successfully pacified by a dance performance carried out by the Academy's princess maidens under Greyworth's directions.

Originally, there was supposed to be a second day of the Great Festival of the Spirits. Naturally, it was suspended. Students worked together with the restoration team sent by the Ordesia Empire to restore the city streets.

The Imperial Knights were still investigating where the militarized spirits attacking town came from. A rough hunch would point to them being possessions of Murders that was deeply connected to the interior of the Alphas Theocracy.

The Empire issued an ultimatum to the Theocracy to accept investigations. Once the newest hierarch, Sjora Kahn, expressed refusal, it would most likely develop into a war between the Empire and the Theocracy.

Lurie Lizaldia remained elusive. The presence of a traitor among the Numbers also came as a great shock to the Empire's top echelons.

Including the organization she belonged to, the Knights' Umbra and Virrey Branford started investigations in pursuit of her.

Also, deemed the mastermind of this incident, Millennia Sanctus—

There were currently still no clues regarding her.

Part 2

—Hence, three days after the incident.

Having recovered his memory, Kamito was having a meal in the room while discussing future plans with the members of Team Scarlet.

"In the end, the Great Festival of the Spirits was postponed."

Claire lamented slightly.

"Postponed, so that means it'll still be held?"

"After all, they can't let the world think that they're bowing down to terrorism."

"Kamito-kun, you're still going to wear that maid outfit, right♪"

"...Maid outfit."

Kamito groaned... He still retained clear memories of the time during his amnesia.

"Hmm, I-I did not get to see it!"

Ellis grumbled as a result.

"Ellis, are your injuries okay?"

"Yes, I suppose..."

Ellis was heavily injured, wrapped all over in bandages. It looked quite painful.

Even after receiving treatment, she still could not move on her own.

"...We have to become stronger."

Everyone agreed with Ellis.

Coming up next was no longer a competition like the Blade Dance. They were going to be swept into a real war.

"I will protect Kamito."

Sticking to Kamito's side, Est spoke expressionlessly.

"Yeah, I'm counting on you, Est."

"Huah, Kamito..."

Est rested her head on Kamito's lap.

...Was it because of the long separation? She seemed to be trying harder to make him spoil her.

"...Ah, s-so unfair."

"Kamito!" "Kamito-san!" "Kamito-kun!"

The girls brought their faces forward, displeased.

—These ordinary days, soon about to end, were especially precious right now.

Kamito cast his gaze towards the seal on his right hand.

(...Restia, I'm being protected by you.)

"Kamito..."

Seeing Kamito like that, Claire and the girls remained silent.

Part 3

—That night.

Near the Ordesia Empire's border, in a certain dark forest, a girl woke up.

Her long, black hair scattered. Her dress, the color of night, was torn and tattered all over.

Her pale skin was covered with numerous marks, as though scraped by tree branches.

The half-naked girl opened her dusk-colored eyes and looked around her with unease.

"...Where, is this?"

No one replied. Frightening cries of spirits were coming from faraway.

"Why am I in this kind of place—"

Presently, the sound of bushes rustling could be heard.

An elderly couple, looking like they were taking a stroll in the woods, emerged from the bushes.

"Oh no, there's a girl collapsed in the forest!" "What?"

The old lady helped the girl up and fed her water from a flask.

"Lady, what happened? Are you lost in the forest?"

"...I don't know."

"Then where did you come from?"

"...Where?"

The girl cocked her head in puzzlement.

"Hmm. That's something you should know, right? What's your name, lady?"

"I am..."

The girl's face gave a distinct reaction for the first time.

She nodded and moved her lips gently, speaking a name.

"Restia—"



Afterword

"I am here, Kamito. Undoubtedly here in your heart—"

A thousand thanks to everyone holding this book in your hands. Thank you for your patience, I now present to you the 12th installment of *Seirei Tsukai no Blade Dance*, "Releasing the Sealed Sword"!

Okay, the third part, the "Spirit War arc" is finally starting. Things are predicted to increase in scale while the main characters' love battles will likewise escalate, so please look forward to future developments!

Now for acknowledgements. Drawing a beautiful cover and illustrations again, Sakura Hanpen-sensei, I am truly grateful. This time, our cover is Ellis-san (School Festival Version). A bit unlike the usual uniform, it's a more mature design.

Former editor in charge, Narita-sama, thank you for all your help along the way. Every volume's discussion and the autograph events at Taiwan and Hiroshima, I have so many happy memories. I look forward to your active performance in your new environment. Former chief editor Misaka, I am so grateful that you've been overseeing my unworthy works ever since my debut. Sorry for causing you so much trouble. Also, there's the new editor in charge, Sukawa-sama, I will be in your care from now on. That said, I am very very sorry for suddenly handing the draft late. (I'm so sorry that I have to say sorry twice.)

Hyoujou Issei-sensei, I'm really looking forward to your every chapter. Combat, performance, the girls' cuteness, everything is super high quality and the manga's second volume is selling with great acclaim. Those who haven't read it, please go buy and check it out.

(Also, the inner cover's image is making me almost lose control.)

Finally, of course, I offer the greatest thanks to the readers!

Also, also, there's great news. Recently, it has been decided that *Seirei Tsukai* will be animated (fireworks!) This is all thanks to everyone's support, dear readers. Also, special thanks goes the first editor in charge, Shouji-sama, Narita-sama for working tirelessly for anime-related affairs. There are many excellent teams and staff on the production side, so please look forward to it.

In the reader's popularity poll, Est and Restia are first and second respectively, separated by a slim margin. 3rd is Claire, 4th is Kamito, 5th is Leonora, 6th is Rubia, 7th is Rinslet, 8th is Fianna, 9th is Ellis, 10th is Scarlet. Readers, your comments in the questionnaires help me a lot, so please send them to me.

—Well then, see you next time with Volume 13!

Shimizu Yuu, October 2014